

*This book was written originally
for a limited group of children in
the Christian Churches in the
United States, and not for the
general public*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE GOOD EARTH

SONS

EAST WIND WEST WIND

THE MOTHER

THE FIRST WIFE

**IS THERE A CASE FOR FOREIGN
MISSIONS?**

TRANSLATED BY PEARL S BUCK

ALL MEN ARE BROTHERS

THE YOUNG REVOLUTIONIST

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His mother broke into sobs and then pleaded with him.

‘Ko-sen, my only one, the doctor says you must drink it if you are to live. Listen, my son! It has the heart of the tiger from the southern hills brewed in it—that is to make you strong! It has the entrails of a great serpent dried and powdered into it—that is to make your life long! What lives longer on the earth than a serpent? It has herbs of magic qualities whose very names are known only to geomancers, they are so magic. Drink, my son, my only son! If you die then I die also. What use is a mother when her only son is dead and there can be no more born to her in her old age? My little son—my little son!’

But Ko-sen could scarcely understand what she said. Her voice sounded very faint and far away, and his fevered blood pounded in his ears like water roaring after spring floods. He lay still and he whispered over and over:

‘But it is very bitter—it is very bitter.’

And he would drink no more. Then the fever rose again in his blood as it had for many nights, and when darkness fell he did not know whether he was thirsty or

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not of what was the matter with him. His head was full of noise and confusion, and although he listened and tried to repeat aloud what he heard there, the words came broken and without meaning, and try as he would he could not hear the end of any sentence. Only sometimes through all the confusion in his own head he heard a voice louder than any other, and that voice cried out in terror.

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his head. He remembered his father's strong arms lifting the flail high above his head, high above the threshing-floor before the house. His father was stronger than anyone in the village. Then, before he was aware for more than a moment, Ko-sen slipped back into the dark confusion of his fever again.

Out of that confusion he waked suddenly to this silence. He looked about him, faint with weakness. The noises were gone out of his head. There was silence there at last, silence as great as that in the room where he lay.

But where was he? This was not his room. This was not his bed. His own bed had always stood in the small, earth-walled room of his father's farm-house. There should be above him and around him the blue cotton bed-curtains and above these the warm thatch of the roof, laced with hempen ropes against the rafters. There across from him should be his little table, his stool, his box that held his few changes of clothing. If it were after harvest there might be baskets of grain against the walls, because the house, if it were a good year, was too small for the fruits of their fields.

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But there was nothing like these about him, nothing that he knew. He lay on a narrow, curtainless, bamboo cot. Above him, immensely high above him, was a great arching roof of tiles supported by enormous beams. The beams were varnished red and blue and yellow, and dragons crawled their painted length there in colours rich and dimmed with age and with the clouds of cubyche feathers from beam to beam. His cot stood against the wall, a brick wall, and the floor was not the beaten earth floor of his home, but great tiles set in a pattern he could not follow, and worn smooth and polished with the passing of many feet. Then at the other end of the hall he saw

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patient face smiling and weeping at the same time, her familiar blue cotton coat drooping from her thin shoulders. He looked at her with a great comfort swelling his heart. He would have liked to ask her, 'What is it I do here?' But when he tried to find his voice there was not strength in him to raise it and he could only look at her sleepily and smile a little. Then she brought him quickly a bowl of something and held it to his lips and he drank of it. Ah, good, fragrant tea this time—not the bitter stuff! He drank again and again and then before he could take another swallow he slipped suddenly away once more, not into the old dreadful confusion and noise, but into a place of quiet and rest and sleep.

Then one morning, but he could not tell how many mornings it was after the noise had gone from his head, he awoke and the sun was streaming in the latticed doors from the courtyard and his voice was suddenly there again in his throat and he had strength enough to bring it forth and to ask his mother:

'My mother, where am I?'

And she who was always there beside him

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promise of his next year's rice crop that he might hire Chang, the skilled physician from the city. But even that one had no power over such a devil of sickness as had fallen on you, no, not even though he used his most secret and magic prescriptions. So that at last he said, "Well, and you can only take him to the temple and see what the gods will with him, since I can do no more." Therefore are you here, my little son.'

Then suddenly she fell to silent weeping, and Ko-sen looked at her in astonishment and he whispered :

'Why do you weep, but why do you weep, my mother? I shall live!'

But she still wept on and on and he was too weak to think why she wept. He only lay there wondering a little, and when she ceased at last and bowed her head over his hand, which she held, he fell again into contented sleep.

Thus in the quiet of the temple, in the dusky quiet of the gilded gods, Ko-sen lay and grew strong. His mother lived there with him, but morning and evening his father came from his fields and sat a while

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beside his cot. He spoke little, this sturdy, dark-skinned farmer. The skin of his face and of his arms and bare legs was burnt a dark ruddy brown under the sun of summer and winter. If he spoke it was always of the plain work he did every day. Sometimes he said :

‘ Well, my son, to-day I harnessed the water buffalo to the new plough and I ploughed for winter wheat. It seems to me the soil is good enough this year, not dry and not wet, and if there is enough snow we shall have a good harvest if we do not have flood in the spring before the wheat is cut.’

Sometimes he thought hard to think of something to please Ko-sen especially and so one day he said :

‘ Your yellow dog mourns for you and looks everywhere about the house and the fields and he lies beside your bed.’

But when he said this he looked away suddenly and covered his face in his hand. And Ko-sen, wondering, asked :

‘ What is it, my father ? ’

But his father only shook his head, and on that day he took his leave more quickly and more early than on other days. Usually

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he stayed until the evening service of the priests was over, sitting beside Ko-sen and listening in silence to the long, mournful, swelling music that came out of the hall where the priests met at dawn and at sunset to worship the gods.

Sometimes, but this was seldom, Ko-sen's little sister came. She was two years younger than Ko-sen, who was now sixteen, and her feet were bound and being bound more tightly every day for her marriage, and this binding, since it was not yet complete, was still painful and she could not walk easily even the scant mile from their home to the temple. When she came in she leaned upon a little bamboo stick and she sat down on the stool and crossed her legs and held her little feet for a while to ease them before she could walk for the pain.

Ko-sen watched her sorrowfully thus one day as she sat, for he loved his sister and she had been more to him than most sisters are to their brothers, for out of the ten children his mother had borne there were only two of them left, the youngest and nearest together. Yet he knew on that sad day seven years ago when his mother had begun

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to bind Siu-may's feet that it must be, for Siu-may was even then betrothed as he was himself, and the man whom she was to wed had bargained that her feet must not be longer than four inches on the day of her marriage. That day Ko-sen, seeing his sister weep, had gone to his mother and begged :

'Do not, I beg of you, my mother, bargain thus that she whom I am to wed shall have small feet. I hate them!'

But his mother answered :

'Even so, her mother will bind her feet for very pride in her.'

Thus Ko-sen, lying in his bed in the temple, the health growing again into his blood and his flesh, watched this small sister of his on this day. Her face was pale and her eyes were closed and she sat holding her feet and breathing heavily, her lips pressed together. And it came to him dimly, although he hardly knew how to say it even to himself, that it was very hard to be a girl ; even a welcomed and loved girl child in a good home like this, it was hard. And there were many homes less good than his where the daughters were not treated so well, whether because parents were not so

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kind as his, or else, there being many girls alive, girls were not so welcome as his one sister. And thinking thus he lay and ached in his heart because of his sister's pain.

It happened on this same day a little later as his sister sat beside him and they talked, that their mother left for a while to go out into the court into the sunshine and air. And the two were left alone and Ko-sen said to his sister :

‘Siu-may, I have something to ask you.’

And Siu-may said :

‘What is it, Ko-sen ?’

And Ko-sen said :

‘Why is it that my mother weeps so much even now when I am getting well and when in a few more days I shall put my feet to the floor, and why does my father sit and look at me so and then turn his eyes away and cover them with his hand ? One would think I were yet to die !’

Then Siu-may fell very silent and her little pale face went paler still and she pretended to be very busy with a button on her coat that would not stay fastened in its loop.

‘Tell me !’ begged Ko-sen, suddenly frightened, although he did not know of what.

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She looked up at him then. 'They do not know how to tell you,' she whispered. 'They have told me to tell you if I can; but how can I even, my brother, tell you?'

Then indeed Ko-sen knew that there must be some evil in store for him, for Siu-may looked at him sadly, as sadly as though she saw him lying there dead, and her pretty dark eyes filled with tears and she winked them so that the tears fell round and bright down her cheeks and upon her little blue cotton coat.

'Now must I know my evil fate,' said Ko-sen faintly. 'Whatever it is, I must know.'

'You see, the doctor could not cure you,' Siu-may said suddenly and then she stopped again, for the sobs choked up into her throat. Ko-sen looked at her steadily.

'But I am alive and well almost,' he replied, still looking at her.

'Yes, but—oh, Ko-sen,' cried Siu-may, suddenly breaking forth in a rush of words, 'it is only because you were given to the gods—you have been given to the gods—and for this the gods let you live!' She began to weep then and to tremble, and she trembled as she turned to look over her shoulder at the gleaming guilt figures of the

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idols, silent and shining out of the dusk of the hall.

Ko-sen lay motionless, looking at his sister. He could not for a moment think at all. Then slowly the meaning of what Siu-may had said came flooding over him, for well he knew what it was. Given to the gods! They had dedicated him to the temple—to the service of the gods. All his life, then, must be spent here in their shadow! Here must he live, here must he die, a priest, less than a man, separate from his kind—in the shadow, in the shadow! He turned his face to the wall and lay silent for a long time.

When at last he could speak his words came muffled through his stiff lips. 'I wish they had let me die, I wish I were dead.'

Then Siu-may crept forward and took his hand in her small cold hand and she said, coaxing him:

'No, Ko-sen, that we could not bear. You must not blame our father and our mother. They did the only thing they could. They chose the lesser death, my brother. For in this way we can still come to see you. Later when you are full priest you may even come home to see us, even though rarely.'

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But if you were under the earth we could never, never see you again. No—no, you must not blame them ! ’

But Ko-sen could not speak and he could not turn his face to her again because he would not weep before her, and his heart was swelled so big in his bosom and so hot in his throat that if he turned to her he must weep it all out. So he lay still and stiff, and at last she pressed his hand a little and stood up and took her bamboo staff and she said, sighing :

‘ I must go before it is too dark, for I have to cook our father’s rice for him when he comes in late and weary from the fields. He is cultivating the land now after the winter frosts. Do not grieve, my brother. Do not think “ I wish I were dead.” Think only, “ What if I were dead indeed ? ” ’

But still he could not answer her, and he lay there, and when his mother came in he knew from her silence that Siu-may had told her he knew and he could not speak even to his mother. He lay on silent while the sun sank behind the courtyard walls and early night fell upon the temple. Out of the heavy dusk he heard the evening chants of the priests, and the music rose

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long and mournful, rising and falling like a wail.

‘ Prisoners ! ’ he thought to himself.

And with the word he saw suddenly the whole of what it would be when he was among them, his grey robe, his shaven head, mingled, lost, among the others, and his swelling heart broke and he burst into weeping, his face muffled in his quilt.

II

THEN as the days passed Ko-sen knew that what his sister had told him was true. He could not speak of it, but in many little ways he knew it was true. His parents never said, 'When you come home again we will do this and this,' and there was never any talk of the day when he could get up from his bed and be able to go home.

One day he put his feet to the tiled floor of the temple, and leaning on his mother's shoulder he went out a few steps into the courtyard and sat on a little stone seat there in the sunshine. How strange it was to be up again ! But how little worth getting up when he looked at the great gates of the temple and knew how never would he pass through them any more except knowing he must return !

He sat there with a heavy heart and this in spite of the sharp silvery sunshine streaming through a crooked old pine-tree, streaming even into the green waters

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of the small square pool where little gold-fish darted to and fro, stung into action with the cold of the water and the brilliance of the sunshine. If he had been himself he would have managed somehow to get to the edge of that pool and watch the fish, for he did not see gold-fish every day. But now it did not seem worth while, since he must see them every day until the end of his life.

A young priest came out of a door near by and passed slowly down one of the covered verandas that led from court to court. He did not look at Ko-sen; his mind was elsewhere and he walked with his eyes on the ground and his hands tucked into the sleeves of his robe. But Ko-sen looked at him with painful interest. So would he look, like this young priest, wrapped in the dull grey robes, his head shaven also, and upon his bare scalp the nine sacred scars which must be burned on every priest's head with live sticks of incense on the day on which he takes his vows, nor can he cry out when the fire begins to burn into his flesh but only bear it silently.

Only once in these days of his growing health did Ko-sen speak of his trouble, and

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that was on a day when he felt much stronger and he could walk easily to and fro from his bed to the stone seat in the courtyard. And on this day in the evening he walked back to his bed a little cheered by the brightness of the day. Then there in the temple hall beside his bed he saw his mother, and she sat and sewed on something, some dull grey mass of cloth that lay in her lap, and there were darker spots upon it where her tears had fallen silently as she sat and sewed.

Then Ko-sen looked at her, and standing there he muttered, 'Why did you do it, then—why did you do it?'

And she looked at him, beseeching him, as though she were asking his forgiveness, and at last she said:

'My son, what else was there to do? The doctor had given you up to death and it was the last hope. And true it was that when we had given you to the temple, when we had cut off every thread you had with life, even to the breaking off of your betrothal and the giving of your betrothed to another, we saw you grow better and better. And to-day you are alive—you are alive!'

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Ko-sen looked wildly then at the gilt gods. They stood row upon row, stolid, unmoved. To these he belonged!

‘But you have no son any more!’ he cried. ‘If I belong to these, you have no son any more!’

‘You are alive,’ his mother answered steadily, her hands quiet above the priest’s robe. ‘You are alive, and sometimes I can come here and see you and touch you and I can bring you dainties at New Year time—not flesh, I know, for you may eat no more flesh now nor anything made from the flesh of beasts or fowls, but even so I will find dainties to bring you, my son.’

But Ko-sen would not be comforted. It seemed to him he had lost everything, his parents, his home—that small, cosy, earthen house, warm under its thatched roof: he must lose these for these vast cold silent halls; the good fields lying in the sun and rain where he had worked and played he must now lose for these close courts, these narrow passages; even his dog he must lose, his little yellow dog who mourned because he did not come home. All that he had and would have had as the son of his home was gone.

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‘ ‘And who will be my father’s son,’ he muttered thickly, ‘and who will farm the land after him and carry on the family name?’

‘That also we have arranged,’ his mother replied. ‘We went to the one to whom your sister is betrothed, the son of the tobacco merchant in the village, and we said, “Will you for a sum of money when you wed our daughter come into our house and take our name and become our son by the law, since our only son must be given to the gods if he is to live?” And since his father has four other sons they were willing, although your father will have to sell some of the land to pay them, and the young man is too sharp and greedy, and I did not like it that he should be so greedy, because it speaks ill for your sister’s husband.’

She fell to sewing again, her face troubled, and Ko-sen sat down heavily on the side of his bed and he watched her and he thought to himself angrily :

‘And the house and the farm and all that was to be mine is gone, then.’

And his heart was heavy as a stone within him because the place where he had run

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and leaped and played with his dog and with the boys he knew from the village was now gone, and his home was given to another. Then he turned to his mother furiously, feeling he had been done a great wrong, and he said :

‘ Well, and if you had asked me, I would have said, “ Let me die rather than this,” for now I shall live on in bitterness, and I shall think of the house and the land and all that was to have been mine there still and I cannot go to it. And you are there and my father and my sister, but another is the son in my house. It would have been easier for me if I had been dead and knew nothing ! ’

Then his mother threw down the robes she was making and she came and knelt beside him and clasped his knees as he sat and she said over and over :

‘ But, my son, you are alive—you are alive ’ ; and seeing her love was unspeakable for him he could say no more and he only bowed his head down and was silent.

After that he spoke no more of the matter, for he saw that what had happened was inevitable, and not out of any anger or

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out of anything except the greatest love had his parents given him up, and if he suffered, so did they as much and he could say no more.

Then on a day when the robes were complete and when he was well again and able to walk without weariness, his mother laid the finished robes upon his bed and she came up to him and gazed at him and she took his hand and rubbed it upon her cheek and held it against her face and smelled of it as she had when he was a baby and as mothers smell the sweet flesh of their little children, and then gazing long at him she turned away at last and went swiftly through the great gates. And Kosen knew she was gone and that she would come back no more to sit beside his bed and from now on he was alone in the temple and must bear it.

III

THUS began Ko-sen's new life. He who before this all his years long had risen early in the morning and had gone out into the fresh winds and sunshine and into the freedom of his father's fields must now rise sluggishly in the closeness of the temple cloisters and pass with the silent priests through the halls and through the narrow walled courts to the great hall where the dawn service was held. Many days of his life he had spent on the back of his father's water buffalo when he took it out to graze on the hillsides. There under the shade of bamboos or over shorn grave-lands he lay half asleep, curled upon the beast's broad warm back and lulled by its slow movements as it went forward or backward to pull at the grass. From this bed he had looked up into the wide skies and over miles of valley where the fields lay small and close-set in their greenness, and where among the other villages he saw his

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own village and marked his own home, a small brown house built low to the earth.

Now there were to be no more of these days of idle freedom. Now after the dawn service he must hasten to help the temple servants to set forth the rice and the salted vegetables for the priests' breakfasts, and he must pour out their tea, and as they sat and ate in silence, listening as they ate to the reading of sacred books by one of their number, he must stand and see that each had what was necessary. Only when they were satisfied and gone on their way to their several duties could he sit down with the other novices and eat.

Sitting thus his food was tasteless to him, and he could not but think about his home and the square table in the middle room of its three earth-floored rooms, and about the table his father and mother and Siu-may. There also would be the familiar things of the home he knew so well—his father's rake and hoe in the corner, the baskets of grain and dried seeds hanging from the wall, the dried herbs and onions and perhaps a dried fowl or a bit of salt pork hung from the rafters where the cat could not reach it. Under the table his yellow dog would be

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crouching to catch a stray bit of rice or a fish-bone. Many a time had Ko-sen slipped a choicer bit to his dog that his mother had given to him. Thinking of that merry, faithful dog friend, Ko-sen's eyes filled suddenly and he could not eat any more, and he rose and took his bowl into the kitchen, and then he went into the room where he slept in a long row of beds with the novices and younger priests. Then he must get his books and go to the temple school, and he set himself dully to his tasks that he might not have the time to grieve.

Now Ko-sen had never been to school in his life, nor had any of the children of the village where he lived. 'What can come out of books that will teach a man how to plant seed and cultivate the earth?' his father used to say when any talked of school. 'I have not read in books, nor my father before me, and we have lived our time and we have not starved even in time of famine.'

Ko-sen therefore had never gone to school. Sometimes when he went with his father to the neighbouring market to sell the vegetables and grain he passed the school on the street that went over a stone

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bridge, and he looked in at the door and he saw the close dark room filled with small tables and benches, and at the front a wrinkled old man with a big bamboo and paper fan in his hand summer and winter. Sometimes he beat a lad with it if he did not learn his lesson well or played at his desk. The pupils all chanted together the books they must memorize and if any stopped the old teacher spotted it and went swiftly to him and dealt him a stinging blow. Then Ko-sen went on with his father and rejoiced in his freedom from this also.

But in the temple he must learn to read, for a priest must read the sacred books of Buddha in order to meditate upon the sayings and to learn the way to escape from an evil world. Ko-sen, sitting in the long, narrow schoolroom of the temple, windowless and without light except from the open door and from a small skylight set into the tiles of the roof, crouched over his book where the crooked characters were printed and thought to himself that he loved—he loved the world and had no desire to escape from it but only into it again. But still he must keep his eyes on the book, for the old priest who was their teacher was not gentle

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and he could be hard on the six lads who bent their heads over the books that they might be priests.

Now of these six lads Ko-sen was the youngest except for one who was scarcely like the others. This youngest of all was named Fah-li, and he was not destined to be a real priest as Ko-sen was, but one of those who are called working-priests, that is, one who is half servant and who may never rise to be abbot or to any high place in the temple.

This Fah-li was a merry boy of twelve, his face badly marked by smallpox and one eye sunken in. At first Ko-sen scarcely saw him, for he did not come to school all day as the others did, but only for a little while in the afternoon when he was free from the work in the kitchens where he served the temple cooks. The teacher knew that Fah-li was half servant, and so he paid no especial heed to him as he did to the others, thinking it enough if Fah-li learned a few scattered characters and memorized a few chants that were commonly used.

Even so, Fah-li had a hard time, for he was fonder of playing than of learning his book. Indeed, it was thus that Ko-sen

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first noticed him more than he did the others, for it seemed that every day the teacher slapped Fah-li on his shaven head because he would play at some contrivance of string and small bamboo sticks that he hid in his desk, and every day Fah-li sobbed and rubbed his grimy fists into his eyes, and yet every day he yielded again and played. Even when his teacher demanded to be given the thing with which he played, Fah-li was soon playing again with his brush, drawing pictures instead of characters, or else he was folding a bit of paper industriously to make a ship or a horse, and at this paper-folding he was extraordinarily skilful, sometimes making little men that stood alone or a dog or bird or camel. But of characters he learned nothing at all.

At first Ko-sen was sorry for Fah-li that he was beaten so much ; then he could not but laugh, for when Fah-li saw Ko-sen looking at him, out of the midst of his tears he made a face, pulling down one side of his face and lifting the other, until Ko-sen could not but laugh, and when Fah-li saw he had made Ko-sen laugh he shifted his face so that what was up was now down, and he did it so quickly that Ko-sen thought

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he had never seen so funny a sight. Out of this slight thing he spoke to Fah-li one evening when the school was over and they passed out of the door together. And Ko-sen said :

‘How is it you can pull your face this way and that, so that even at a side-show on the village street I have not seen a funnier sight?’

‘My father taught me,’ replied Fah-li, grinning so that his teeth shone whitely out of his brown, scarred face. ‘My father was a man who swallowed swords and tossed snakes and held fire in his mouth and he taught me.’

‘Can you do these things?’ asked Ko-sen, wondering and eager. Many times on festival days or at New Year he had seen these wandering showmen and companies of men and women who can do strange things that ordinary humans cannot.

‘Oh, some of them,’ said Fah-li carelessly, and then as though he did it without trying he suddenly dropped to his hands and walked along the whole passage-way with his feet in the air. Ko-sen watched fascinated, and for the first time since his mother left him he forgot to be sad.

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‘What else can you do?’ he demanded, running up to Fah-li.

Fah-li did not answer but he gave himself a twist and there suddenly was his laughing face looking up at Ko-sen backwards from between his legs and his legs walking on as usual. Ko-sen burst out laughing.

‘You look like a crab!’ he shouted.

Suddenly a great voice roared out of the kitchens. ‘Now where is that idle slave of a slave?’

‘Here!’ cried Fah-li in great alarm, and he straightened himself out and was gone.

This was the beginning of their friendship. Ko-sen could scarcely wait for the next day to come and when they had finished their books again he went eagerly to Fah-li and Fah-li grinned at him.

‘Let us go somewhere and talk,’ said Ko-sen in a whisper. ‘I want to see you go like a crab again!’

‘I shall be beaten if I am late at the kitchens,’ whispered Fah-li, ‘but to-night after the priests have eaten and the pots are scraped I will meet you at the gate to the hall of service.’

‘There will I be, then,’ promised Ko-sen.

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He waited impatiently for the night to come. The sunset chant seemed longer than he could bear. He stood behind the priests among the others who were novices, or, like himself, not yet even novices. Every other day that he had stood thus he had felt himself lost, a grey-robed figure among all these others grey-robed. His thoughts had always flown to his home and he bent his head lest others see the tears in his eyes. When the others knelt on their cushions to knock their heads before the gods his body had moved mechanically also but his mind was never there, and his heart, aching and swift, was on its way home. But to-night he thought of Fah-li and he was not sad as he had been, for now there was one in the great, silent, lonely place with whom he might talk.

That night, when the priests had eaten and drunk and had gone to their sleeping-halls and the upper priests to their cells where they meditated alone, Ko-sen finished the round of duties he was compelled to do in his apprenticeship. He swept the hall where the big gold Buddha sat and he dusted the altar before it and he took out the old burnt red candles and set in fresh

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ones and he dipped the ash from the urn and thrust in some sticks of incense and lit it new. Then he looked about and seeing no one he went quickly out and around the corner, and there, crouched against the wall in the shadow where the light of the young moon could not search him out, was Fah-li waiting for him.

There in the blackness of the shadows cast by the high wall around the temple court the two boys talked, and Ko-sen found who Fah-li was. He was the son of a travelling magician from the north who had come southward in famine times to ply his trade and who was taken ill at the market town to which the temple belonged, and, dying, he had been able to do nothing else but to give his son to the priests to serve them, and here Fah-li had been for three long years.

‘But every night before I sleep I practise the things he taught me,’ Fah-li said, ‘because some day I shall run away from this temple. I will be neither cook nor priest—not I! See here!’ He drew out of his coat’s bosom a short and narrow sword made of copper. ‘It is one my father had and I took it and hid it from the inn-keeper when he seized my father’s goods for

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the payment of the bill. Look ! ' and throwing back his head, he thrust the sword half way down his throat. ' There ! I can only get it half down now, but every day I practise it, and when I can get it all the way down I shall run off and earn my living as my father did. '

Run away ! Ko-sen had not thought of it. He went dreaming back to his bed. Well, if he—if he too ran away, what could he do ? He could not depend on Fah-li. Perhaps Fah-li would not even want him along ; what he could earn would not feed two. Ko-sen took off his robe and crept into his quilt carefully, not to disturb the others. He puzzled on. If he ran away he could beg—but could he ? Beggars were organized into societies, and if one begged who did not belong to their band it was dangerous for him, for they might set upon him and even kill him. And he did not wish to belong to a beggar band—no, no, that was worse than being priest.

He lay awake long into the night, thinking, staring into the soft blackness. Four times in each hour the deep, solitary note of the temple bell boomed forth, marking the passing of the night to dawn, and twelve times did Ko-sen hear this bell sound before he slept.

IV

SPRING came on, even spring in the temple, and there it was marked by the budding of the crooked apple-trees, gnarled with age, in the courtyards, and by the budding of the golden flowers upon the bare black branches of the la-may tree. At noon the sun shone warm into the courts and streamed through the latticed doors into the high and dusky halls and startled the dust upon the very gods themselves.

The swift winter dusk had given way to longer twilight and later darkness each day, and Ko-sen, after his school-hours were over, found that he had an hour, and more than an hour, when he had no duty to do. Therefore he took to going at this time out of the temple gate, at first a little way, and then farther on the road toward his home. He knew he must not go home unless a special permission were given him and as yet he had not dared to ask the abbot for this, for the abbot was grave and severe and

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exceedingly holy, so that the lower priests even could not have speech with him. The rule was made because those who prepare for priesthood must separate themselves from all ties of home. But still it gave Ko-sen comfort to walk in the loved and familiar road.

One mild day when he had been very restless he walked thus, and he looked here and there as he walked at all he knew—the wide flat plains, the rim of low mountain circling about it in the distance. He went farther on this day than he ever had; so far, that in a clump of trees on the edge of the plain he thought he could see his own village and even perhaps his house. Straining his eyes to see it, it seemed to him that he had been a long time away in another country. And then a bend of the road brought him to a low, grassy bank and he looked and saw some one sitting there, and he looked again and he saw it was his sister!

‘Siu-may!’ he cried in great joy, and she rose, swaying a little on her small feet. It was the first time he had seen any of his family except for a brief moment at New Year when his mother had come for an instant to the gate of the temple to bring him a little basket of sweet cakes.

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‘Ko-sen!’ she answered joyfully. ‘Now the gods be praised! I have come here often, now that the spring nights are late, thinking that sometimes you might walk out of the temple, and I thought if you did I would wave my blue apron and you would see and we could talk together a little while. It seems to me I have not seen you for half my life. How is it with you? And we could not even bring you meats at New Year because you cannot eat meat these days any more, now that you are to be a priest, and my mother had such a time making those sweet cakes with neither egg nor the fat of a pig. And I could not eat myself at the feast for thinking of you with nothing but rice-flour cakes and sugar!’ She finished and looked at him sorrowfully.

‘Well, and I thought of you and of all the things you were eating at home,’ said Ko-sen discontentedly, and he bent his head to look to the road and he kicked the dust of the road a little with the toe of his grey priest’s shoe of cloth. ‘And I can tell you the vegetable we have in the temple, and nothing but rice and vegetable weary me to sickness. Sometimes I think of those little pork balls my mother makes with ginger,

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and I think of the fish she steeps in that brown gravy that is sweet and sour together, and I cannot swallow the rice at the temple and the cabbage stew.'

'I know,' said Siu-may sadly, and was silent.

Then because of the sadness between them there seemed little to say, and at last Ko-sen sighed and asked heavily :

'Is—is everything as it ever was ?'

'Yes,' Siu-may answered. 'Father is hoeing the wheat now and he is sifting the soil in the rice-beds for planting the seed rice. . . . No, there is one thing changed and I have to tell you. Your little dog is dead.'

'Dead ?' exclaimed Ko-sen quickly, looking up. 'How did that come about ?'

'I do not know, Ko-sen,' said Siu-may slowly. 'He seemed to have an illness, and we could not cure him of it, and he would not eat but he whined day and night, and one morning in the time of the great cold before the New Year my mother arose and the dog lay at the door dead. I thought perhaps our mother told you when she brought the cakes to the temple gate.'

'No, she did not tell me,' said Ko-sen,

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and after he had thought a while he added at last, 'I am even glad the dog is dead.'

He stood looking over the plain then, wrapped in his long grey robes, and the setting sunshine fell on him but he did not feel its brightness. Once he had dashed over these fields barelegged, his short blue trousers rolled up his thighs, his back bare to the sun and wind and warm summer rains, and his dog had leaped about him, barking and joyous

'I am glad my dog is dead,' Ko-sen said again; and then suddenly he went on, looking into Siu-may's eyes as he spoke. 'Siu-may, this decides me. I have something to tell you, too. Siu-may, I am going to run away from the temple! I and a boy there named Fah-li are going to run away together. Siu-may, I cannot—I cannot stay at the temple. You don't know. I cannot be a priest. The good priests are like dead men. They pray and they fast and they beat themselves with ropes in the night and their inner robes are bloody—I have seen them so to be washed in the morning. And the ones who are not good—it is not meet for me even to tell you what they are and how

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evil they are and the wicked, wicked things they do. I have seen them rob the very gifts off the altars ! ’

‘ Ko-sen—off the altars ! ’ asked Siu-may in horror. ‘ And do not the gods strike them down ? ’ Her pretty black eyes were wide with fear.

‘ Those old gods—those old images,’ said Ko-sen suddenly, his lips curling. ‘ I used to say as you do, “ Shall not the gods punish them ? ” But those old gods see nothing at all. Good or evil they do not see who worships or who does not. I do verily believe they see and hear nothing and understand nothing at all ! ’

‘ *Ko-sen !* ’ breathed Siu-may in terror. ‘ Do not—do not speak so ! You do not know what spirit in the evening air might hear you ! ’

But Ko-sen would not be afraid.

‘ Well, it is this I have to tell you,’ he said stoutly.

Siu-may looked at him in dismay. ‘ But what will you eat and drink ? ’ she asked, half stammering. ‘ And people will see your priest’s robes and will know you are a run-away and you will be caught and sent back and you will be punished—and although you ;

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say the gods see nothing, perhaps this they will surely see.'

'I do not fear those gods,' said Ko-sen with great contempt. 'Why, Siu-may, I have to wipe the dust off their faces as though they were children! But the priests I do fear. I must plan well. If worst comes, I can beg. But in the south there are in the cities rikshas that men can hire and pull people about in for money, and I am strong as a man now and nearly as tall. My priest's robes, though—there only I do not know what to do. I can do nothing in these robes!'

He pulled at his long, loose sleeves with hatred and he flung out his hands. He thought a moment deeply and then he said:

'Are there none of my old clothes at home that you could bring me here secretly?'

But Siu-may shook her head, her face sorrowful.

'There is nothing of yours,' she said. 'My father and my mother could not bear to see your coat hanging on the wall on its peg, and my mother wept to see it there and know that you never were to wear it,

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and so my father took all that had been yours and he took them into the city and he pawned them, and the money he gave to the abbot for your ordination that there may be special notice of it made.'

'I suppose it is easy to forget me now, then,' said Ko-sen with great bitterness.

But Siu-may put her small hand quickly over his mouth.

'You are not to say things like that,' she said. 'Ko-sen, we never forget you. We never have the little sesame cakes any more because my mother says she cannot bring some to you since they are made with pig's fat, and none of us shall eat them, she says, since you may not. In a hundred, hundred ways we remember you every day.'

'But it is still as though I were dead to you,' Ko-sen insisted, although in his heart he was touched to know what his mother had said.

'Oh, my brother, but not dead as you might have been!' answered Siu-may, half whispering.

'Well,' said Ko-sen resolutely, 'I shall be dead no more. I shall run away to life! When the news reaches my father and mother that I have gone and none can find

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me, see that you help them to bear it. 'Tell that you met me here and that I told you, and tell them that I said one day, somehow, I would surely come back to them again and to you. But now I can tell nothing more except that go I must, even though I do not know how, even though I am wrapped about in these robes I hate so heartily. I will go somehow.'

Then to his great surprise Ko-sen saw his pretty young sister fall to the ground and seize him suddenly about his feet, and she wept and cried out :

'Oh, Ko-sen, I too—I too ! I am bound as much as you ! Let me go with you—I need to run away too ! Ko-sen, yesterday that man to whom I am betrothed came to see the house and the lands, since he is to be my father's son and take the family name in your stead, and my mother sent me to the inner room, since it is not meet for maid to see man, and most of all the man she is to wed, but I looked secretly out of the hole in the wall where the paper is torn and I saw him. Oh, Ko-sen, I cannot wed him—indeed I cannot ! He is tall and large and fat, and his face is cold and cruel and his voice is so heavy, and, Ko-sen, he smiles

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all the time, but not kindly. Ko-sen, you hate being priest, but oh, I hate this man. Let me go, let me go too ! ’

She looked up at him with her tears streaming down and Ko-sen winked hard his own eyes and his heart was shaken in him and he could not answer. Could he—could they—manage? And while he hesitated she rose and stood swaying, and reached for her little stick, and he saw this and knew it could not be and he said heavily :

‘How can you go, Siu-may, when with your feet as they are you can scarcely walk the mile to the temple, and how can you run away on those feet ? ’

Siu-may looked at him, and she turned her face away.

‘I—I forgot,’ she whispered. ‘I who never forget these feet of mine—I forgot them this once ! ’

And Ko-sen, seeing her little face grow pale and grave and set, felt more sorrow than he could bear, and he shook his shoulders and flung back his head and he said between his teeth :

‘Siu-may, somewhere there must be a world not like this. I swear, I swear I will

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come back to you and set you free—some-time I will come back !’

‘But I am to wed two years from this summer,’ she said quietly, ‘and when I am wed there is none who can set me free.’

‘Yet will I come,’ said Ko-sen. And he turned and without another word he went back to the temple.

V

KO-SEN was now determined to escape, although how the plan was to work itself for himself and Fah-li he did not know. But he was patient and he watched for opportunity, and meantime he did his work so well that none of the priests suspected that he was dissatisfied and none even suspected his special friendship with Fah-li, for if these two met it was at night when they talked a little of their plan to escape together and then parted swiftly.

Fah-li was all for walking out one day casually and never coming back, but Ko-sen was wiser and more cautious.

‘No, Fah-li,’ he said. ‘We should be caught at the next town and brought back, and then all hope would be gone, for we should not be allowed again beyond the outer gate of the temple, and we could never climb these high walls or drop down the other side if we had climbed them. No, we must wait.’

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Now part of every priest's training is to learn how to beg for his temple, and one day during the early summer when the rice grains were swollen in the green sheaths but not yet ripe for cutting, Ko-sen's teacher said to him at the beginning of the afternoon's work :

' You may go this day and take a begging bowl from the hall and one of the smallest of the fish-head drums made of wood and a staff, and you may go along the countryside and to the town and see what you can beg. Approach a shop or a house and beat upon the drum and then hold out the bowl without speech unless men ask you from whence you come and then tell them from the Temple of the Ten Heavens.'

' Is one to go with me or am I to go alone ? ' asked Ko-sen quietly.

The teacher hesitated. He had observed that Ko-sen was a silent, faithful lad who did not mingle even in play with the others and it seemed he was one to be trusted alone.

' You may go as you wish,' the teacher said at last.

' I should like to have Fah-li with me, if it is your will,' said Ko-sen.

Fah-li was sitting at his desk yawning

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mightily over his book, but when he heard Ko-sen say this he sat up suddenly awake.

‘Let me go with him, my master,’ he cried eagerly.

The teacher frowned at him for a moment and then answered :

‘Well, and you may, you idle one, for you must go sometimes and well I know you never can be allowed to go alone lest you play on every street corner, and the gods only know what you might buy of meat and abominable things to eat with what you begged instead of bringing it back to the temple. Go then, the two of you, and be back by the setting sun and bring your bowls to see what you have received of men.’

Ko-sen’s heart beat fast. It was the first time he had been sent out like this. Perhaps it was their chance of freedom ! But he would not even look at Fah-li lest that merry, foolish one burst forth into a laugh and the teacher-priest suspect some hidden prank. Instead, he went decorously to the place where he slept and where his robes, like those of the other priests, hung against the wall, and he took and put on himself a grey

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linen summer robe and he put sandals of straw on his feet over his shoes to protect them and he took up his bowl and staff. Then he went into the entrance hall of the temple and chose the smallest of the wooden drums which are shaped like a fish-head and he went forth

Outside the gate Fah-li waited for him, and when Ko-sen came near, Fah-li began to dance on one leg, and he would have spoken except that Ko-sen said in a quick whisper :

‘ Be quiet ! Do you not suppose that the teacher watches us secretly ? ’

And he strode on gravely ahead and Fah-li, abashed, walked humbly behind him and did none of his clownish tricks for once. Thus walking they went for some distance toward the town, and when they were well out of sight of the temple and were passing through a bamboo grove Ko-sen waited until Fah-li caught up with him and then he said :

‘ This day we will run away ! How, I do not know, but I can wait no longer. ’

At this Fah-li’s merry little eyes shone out of his pocked face and he suddenly let drop one side of his countenance, and Ko-sen

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smiled a little, as he could not but do whenever he saw Fah-li do this absurd thing, and Fah-li, seeing Ko-sen lose his gravity, burst into laughter and turned over and over on his hands in a whirling wheel of grey robes and raised a cloud of dust, and then suddenly he stood upright again and shouted :

‘Off with these skirts !’ and he would have torn off his robes and entered the town in his inner shirt and trousers if Ko-sen had not stopped him.

‘No, Fah-li,’ he said commandingly. ‘Wait ! Let us see what comes. Meanwhile let us go on as we have planned.’

And Fah-li, hearing the quiet authority of Ko-sen’s voice, did as he was told, and thus the two lads entered into the shadow of the great gate through the wall of the town and then out into the street that is the market street and runs north and south of that town.

But going along neither of them in their excitement thought to beg, and this was because each of them looked everywhere thinking how they would run away and how they would disguise themselves. Even Fah-li was quiet in his thinking. Once Ko-sen stopped before a pawnshop, open as all shops are to the street, and he thought to himself :

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‘ If I could see there hanging against the wall or from the roof some of my old clothes, I might beg the shopkeeper to let me have them in exchange for these priest’s robes if he were kindly and willing to help me, or even if I begged money I might buy them back.’

But although he peered inside he could see nothing like his own clothes that he used to wear, and when he would have lingered to see if there was anything that might fit him that had belonged to another, the keeper of the pawnshop came forward and he said :

‘ Now what have I to do with fledgling priests? Be off!’ and he threw them a copper penny in contempt as one throws a coin at a beggar.

The sudden anger swelled in Ko-sen’s heart and he glared angrily at the pawnshop-keeper, but he had turned away and did not see it, and Ko-sen went proudly away without touching the money and in his pride he thought more than ever :

‘ Now indeed I cannot be priest, for men do not consider priests as men!’

But Fah-li was not so proud and he seized the penny and spun it swiftly between his

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thumb and finger and caught it so dexterously that the pawnshop-keeper laughed and cried out :

‘ Now here is a pockmarked fool ! ’ And he would have had Fah-li linger and show him more tricks, but Fah-li saw Ko-sen striding up the street and so he scampered off, his heels showing under his flying robes.

Then suddenly chance brought them the means they sought. Now, at the very end of the market street where it divides into lesser ways and into small winding alleys there is a small, clear place, and when the two lads came to it they saw a man, young and strongly framed standing upon a heap of broken brick, and he was talking aloud, and there were some men standing near to hear him, idlers in the street and farmers who had sold their produce and were on their way home with empty baskets. And Ko-sen stopped to hear what was said, and this is what he heard the young man say :

‘ Your country calls you to come and save her from the heels of the foreign oppressors and from the foreign capitalists who drink her blood and eat her flesh ! Let us drive

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out the cruel foreigners who use their religion as a means to deceive us and to make us think their hearts are as good as their words! They are here to steal our country from us and to rob us of our own land and our people. They entice our children into their schools and then turn their young hearts to the strange foreign religion, and if we do not rise up against these people and set our country free, our country will be lost and all of us slaves to foreign masters. Young men, come forward! Serve your nation—fight in the revolutionary army! Our great leader calls you—Sun Yat-sen calls you!’

Now of all this long and earnest speech to which Ko-sen listened faithfully and closely he understood very little. He did not know who foreigners were except as he had heard travellers who had gone into outer parts come back and speak of foreign devils who had white skin and red hair and blue and green eyes. This sounded fearsome enough, but still he had never seen such for himself. Neither did he know what ‘nation’ meant, seeing that in all his life he had never been away from this countryside and this town where he now stood, and

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neither had his father been away nor any he knew well enough to talk with, and so this also he could not understand. Neither had he ever heard of such a word as 'revolution'. Last of all, he had not heard of that man whom this young man called 'leader'.

But as the young man spoke of these things which did not interest Ko-sen because he did not understand, a great thought came to him. He understood well enough that this man called for soldiers to fight in some army. Now in what army or in what cause meant nothing to Ko-sen because of this great thought that came suddenly to him as he had been listening. They would go as soldiers! He and Fah-li would go as soldiers! Soldiers' uniforms would be given to them then and they could throw away these robes, and who could tell, as they marched among a hundred others, that once they two had been garbed as priests and had lived in a temple?

He hung about, his heart throbbing in his bosom, and he hung about as long as the young man talked, although the day crept on to evening. He moved into this little alley and that, lest some one remark on him

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and Fah-li, and he did not dare to whisper even to Fah-li what he had thought of, lest one hear and seize them.

Fah-li by this time had grown mightily impatient at all this loitering and he could not understand it, and so at last Ko-sen drew him into a shut doorway in a wall and whispered to him his plan. Fah-li understood well enough then and would have shouted with glee except that Ko-sen clapped his hand over Fah-li's mouth.

Together they then waited, keeping sight always of the young man, and at last when night fell the young man ceased his talking, for those who stopped to listen were all gone to their homes. Then Ko-sen and Fah-li followed him through the dusk, and the young man went to the door of a small inn on the town's edge, and before he reached the door Ko-sen touched him on the arm, and the young man turned quickly and Ko-sen said in a low voice :

'We have heard you speak and we would serve in this army, I and my friend.'

'You—priests?' said the young man, astonished.

'We are not yet priests and we would never be if we can find a way out—we hate

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the temple ! ' said Ko-sen passionately, but he kept his voice low.

The young man gave a short laugh and he stopped in the doorway.

' Good lads ! ' he said. ' The temple is nothing but lies and superstition. There are no gods, there is not God anywhere—there are only men like us and we must fight for what we want. Yes, lads, come and join the revolutionary army ! The nation has need of you. And the more willingly will we receive you, we revolutionists, because we oppose the temples and religion everywhere. Down with religion ! '

Now Ko-sen did not know what religion meant, having never heard this word, but so heartily had he come to hate his life in the temple that when the young man said ' we oppose the temples ' he pressed forward and he said :

' We also—we also ! When therefore may we come for our soldier's clothing and cast off these robes ? '

' Now ! ' said the young man resolutely. ' This very night I march onward with the two hundred odd who have joined our ranks from these parts. Come to my room in the inn. '

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‘But we must go secretly,’ said Ko-sen fearfully. ‘If one sees us he will stop us, if he knows the fashion of our robes, and send us back to the temple, for we are bound there and are under the age of freedom.’

‘How old are you?’ asked the young man suddenly.

Ko-sen’s heart stopped. Why had he mentioned age? Suppose the young man said, ‘You are too young to be soldiers—we cannot use them as young as you’? Suppose—suppose he must go back to the temple now when he had seen a chance of freedom open before him! He gazed with painful anxiety through the dusk into the young man’s face, searching for his eyes to see what they would say, and he answered quickly:

‘I am—I am very tall and strong for my age! I am a farmer’s son, used to hardship and work. Although I am but sixteen—but still soon I shall be seventeen, in less than four months now, and Fah-li, although he is a very little younger, it is true, still I can help him!’

The young man gave a low laugh.

‘You are not too young,’ he said; ‘you are not too young to save your country!’

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That night, through the pale light of a little young new moon hung low in the heavens, a band of soldiers, all young and awkward and unaccustomed to marching and to their stiff new uniforms of grey cotton cloth, streamed from the northern gate of the town, and with their faces set to the north they marched through the night behind one who led them. And none knew except the two themselves that among these were two who had run away from the temple.

Ko-sen, holding Fah-li's hand tightly in his in the darkness, thought for one swift moment of his father and of his mother and of Siu-may. When would he see them again? He seemed to see them in his mind for a swift moment, standing sorrowful and deserted. He suffered a pang of separation from them; then the shadow of the temple stretched even over them and he marched more firmly on. He was free at last.

VI

NOW Ko-sen's life was changed indeed. Where at dawn he had been awakened by the slow and heavy beating of the great bell, now he heard cracking through the clean morning air the sharpness of a soldier's bugle. Where he had risen slowly out of his bed in the dim room among the acolytes who slept in beds like his own, now he rose from the ground where he slept on a pallet that he carried by day rolled on his back, and above him the pointed cloth tent instead of the old and carven beams.

There were others with him in this tent, young and cheerful lads gathered from city street and country farm-house, lads weary of the monotony of their lives and eager to be away to something new. One was a bread-maker's son who sickened of his daily task of kneading great foamy loaves of dough and so came to the army of the revolutionists; one was a farmer's son like Ko-sen himself, except that this one's father was a

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very poor man on too small a bit of land and he had not enough to feed all his children, and so this son, the eldest and most robust, ran away to try for better things; and one was an orphan in the house of his uncle, who pushed a wheelbarrow for his daily rice and there was not food for all. Only one came from the house of a man who might be called rich, a youth named Yuan and older than the others, and this one alone of them all could read from his childhood.

These four with Ko-sen and Fah-li slept in the tent, shivering a little in the early mornings, leaping from their pallets and hastening into their outer garments when the bugle called.

Within fifteen minutes they were on their way marching to practice, guns heavy and awkward on their unaccustomed shoulders. Not until they had marched in various numbered groups, had wheeled, divided and joined, run and crouched, at the command of the young man who stood at their head and this for two hours, could they scatter and go to the shed of mats where their morning rice was dipped out to them in bowls from a great iron cauldron built on an earthen oven.

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It was a rough, free life indeed and not bound by any walls but only by the voice of the young captain who commanded them. All through the summer's heat they marched and learned to be more swift and more skilful in their marching and not to start when they fired their guns, although Fah-li always dreaded this moment of firing and would shut his eyes so that his bullets went wide of the mark at which they aimed—a bit of white cloth set against the outer wall of the small city outside which they were encamped. So heartily did Fah-li hate his gun and so heartily did he hate the sound of the early bugle at dawn that he would grumble to Ko-sen and he would say :

‘ Well, and I do not see that this soldiering is far above being a priest, and if some day that gun turns on me for the hateful foreign thing it is, then I shall be at my end, and it would be better to be priest than dead ! ’

‘ No, and it would not, Fah-li,’ said Ko-sen stoutly. ‘ And if you would not fear your gun so much you could do better with it. Besides, see how strong and brown you and I are with this marching in sun and wind and rain, and remember how pale

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and lifeless we were in the shades of the temple.'

But Fah-li would not see these things, and he hated his life as soldier, and only for Ko-sen's sake did he not run away again, because Ko-sen would not.

Now Ko-sen would not run away because some strange power was filling his heart and it was the power of a new love; nor was it the love for any living person but for his country, and this was how it came about.

When the hours appointed for the daily drill were over at the end of the day, it was then the duty of the young soldiers to gather about their leader, and, stacking their guns, sit at ease upon the ground and listen to what their captain said. This young captain was the same young man who had spoken at the end of the market street, and he talked to them now, and again it was of one thing only—and it was of country. And slowly day by day, as he listened, Ko-sen began to see that here was something for which a man might live, his country, for the young captain said over and over again :

'We must serve our country first, and to serve her best we must fight the people who

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crush us and oppress us and seek to take from us, the proud and ancient race of Han, our land and our souls. First must we fight the white oppressors with all our strength and all our hearts, and then we must fight those who would oppress us in our own country.'

'Sir,' asked Ko-sen once, 'and who are all these and what are their names, that when we see them we may know them and kill them?'

'The foreign oppressors are those who have come from across the seas,' answered the young man: 'those from America and from England and from Japan and all outer countries. They have come here and they came in the time of our fathers and of our fathers' fathers, and they sold us opium to make us weak and they fought us and seized our lands by the seas and by our greatest river, and they enticed our ignorant people to buy their wares so that our good and ancient industries failed because there was no one to buy of them. And they put their foreign railways through and destroyed people's fields, and they seized little children and put out their eyes and dug out their hearts and livers for their strange medicines, and now

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they oppress us freshly, for they have wrung what they call treaties in time of war from our fathers, and by the unjust rights which these treaties give them they live on our land and do as they please everywhere.'

Ko-sen listened to this great number of wrongs to his people, and he listened in silence and in trouble. With all this going on, how had he managed to live peacefully all these years and not know of them?

'Do they also build the temples and make the gods?' he asked. 'For if they did, then, will I hate them truly.'

'They do a thing which is more evil than any other,' said the young captain earnestly.

'They teach a strange religion which makes our people leave their own gods and cleave to a *strange god of the white people*. Now we revolutionists are against every sort of god; our own or foreign, we are against them all, and some day we will tear down temples and we will tear down gods. But if men in their ignorance believe for a while in some god, let it be their own and not a foreign superstition such as these preach.'

'And what is the god they preach?' asked Yuan, who sat by Ko-sen.

'How should I know?' said the young

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captain with indignation. 'Do you think I would demean myself to go into one of their accursed halls and hear what is said there? But what does it matter what they preach? We are to drive them out because they do our people only evil and not good. China must be for us—for the Chinese. We do not want any other here. It is our country.'

And then, as though he dreamed a great dream, this young captain said, and many times he said it, his eyes half closed, dreaming and passionate :

'Ah, my country, my country, I will die for you one day, and my life will be well given up! There is no other country like my country, rivers and mountains and mighty plains and strong common men; there is not like these in the whole world! I will lift the chains from my country and she shall be free! I will make her common people free, and the foreign and the rich I will kill with my own hands until I die!'

Then he lifted his sword high, his eyes suddenly alive and flashing and strange, and he cried out to all these lads who watched him and were afraid and moved and trembling with his passion :

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‘Swear with me, you young men!’

And when they had stood he shouted aloud and he made them shout after him these words :

‘As long as my heart beats, as long as my blood flows, so long will I live for thee and thee only, O my country!’

It was an act of worship. The young soldiers were silent. Even Fah-li was grave, although he understood little of what it was all about, for his thoughts had been wandering to play. But they all of them crept away to their tents in the quick-falling summer darkness and on such nights as these there was little talk among them.

VII

THUS out of the speech of his young captain Ko-sen began to see this country of his for what it was. Heretofore people had been but people for him, and field but field and town but town. But now he began to see them all for the first time as parts of a great whole. He learned a new word and it was called patriotism, but in his own tongue it is called 'love-country'. And it seemed to him he had never really loved before, no, not even his parents and Siu-may, for he loved them blindly and instinctively, but with his mind put to it now he loved his country.

Now also he began to see the meaning of books. In the temple school where the priest taught them, Ko-sen had not set himself to understand the meaning of the books put before them. Such books had been filled with the names of gods, and filled with old characters such as men do not use in speech every day but only in

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ancient books of religion and history and poetry.

Here in the camp the young captain taught them all every afternoon, and he taught them out of books that had other characters, for these were words that were the same as those used in common speech. Now, when Ko-sen 'had spelled down a line with his fingers he understood what the book said. This seemed very strange, so that one day he asked :

'How is it that in the temple when I read I could make nothing out of it, and here when I read it is as though one spoke to me?'

'Ah, the revolutionists have done that,' said the young captain proudly. 'We young men of these times have done it. Do you not know, lad, that what you read in the temple was the old classical language called Wen-li? Scholars have used it to write books for hundreds of years and none but scholars can understand it. For this reason our common men and women have been ignorant for generations. Who, indeed, can spend the time, who that must earn his daily rice or starve, to perfect himself in this language that is not spoken? And

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when it is learned, what can one read in it except the foolish old sayings of the sages, which are only sound in these days and have no meaning? No, we—we revolutionists—we have made the spoken and the usual language of the people their written language also, so that when a common man learns even a hundred characters in a book he can understand what they say to him, for they are a hundred of these words he uses every day.'

'And who did this great thing?' asked Ko-sen, wondering at so brave a thought.

'Many of us did it,' said the young captain, 'and we all help in it, demanding that the books the school-children use and the newspapers and the magazines shall all be printed in the common tongue. The leader of it was one called Hu Shih, and there were others with him, but now we need no leader, for the thing grows of itself. One day all common men and the common women, even the women in the houses of the poor, shall read and know what they read.'

Then Ko-sen sat looking at his book and thinking of this he had heard. And he thought of Siu-may and he said to his young captain :

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'I have a little younger sister and we have never thought of her reading, even if I should learn—although I did not wish to read, either. But now since I understand the words I read I wish that she also could learn. And she is very quick to learn anything too, and she could learn, I am sure.'

'Ah,' said the young captain kindly, 'perhaps one day we shall march through that town and country-side again, a victorious revolutionary army coming home, and then you can tell her that revolutionists demand that men and women shall be equal and that now women must learn to read.'

Then Ko-sen thought that this would make him happier than anything, and he set himself harder than ever to the learning of these lines of characters.

Now as Ko-sen read on in his books he began to learn of many things, and most often of all he read over and over again the name of one called Sun Yat-sen and he read also of a book this man had written called *The Three Principles of the People*.

In the shed where they all ate together

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there was hung against the mat wall a picture of a face, and Ko-sen early found out that this was the face of Sun Yat-sen. Only he did not for a long time know why it hung there, nor why they must all bow to it as they did every morning. It hung there under two crossed flags, the flags of the revolution, one a red flag and the other a blue flag, and each had the rising sun as an emblem upon it.

This face in the picture was very grave and sad and remote, and most of all the pictured eyes of the man were remote and looking afar off somewhere. Ko-sen, when he came to know who Sun Yat-sen was, would sometimes stand in front of this picture alone and he would try to catch the look in those dreaming eyes, and sometimes he stood here and again there, trying to stand where the eyes seemed to look, so that he could catch their full gaze. But wherever Ko-sen stood, the eyes looked always beyond him and above him, and there was no way of meeting them.

Then the young captain explained the books Ko-sen and the others read, and they all came to understand that the reason they must stand in silence before the picture and

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then bow three times was because Sun Yat-sen was the man who first conceived and carried through to a point the revolution. He it was who had freed China twenty years before from the foreign emperors from Manchuria who had sat for so many years on the Chinese throne in Peking. And although afterwards he was overcome by false friends and could not for a long time accomplish his purpose to set his country free and make her a republic, yet for twenty years he struggled on, calling to his banner all young and brave men. And working secretly and sometimes even in exile, he gathered the young men, and young women too, together, and at the appointed time he again seized the power of government, and just at that point, when his life seemed to come to his highest point of success, he died of an illness and he never saw the fruit of his life.

But those young men and women who had known him and heard him speak many times pledged themselves to go on and finish his work and set their country free from wrongs ; from the wrongs which had been impressed upon her when foreigners took lands and tariffs and rights for themselves .

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that others had not; from the wrong of the slavery of ancient times in the country itself, wrongs which these very young men and women had suffered, such as the wrong when youth must marry youth at the command of his elders, whatever the heart may say, or the wrong which will not consider a girl child as precious as a boy and which binds her feet and leaves him free, and the wrong which does not give the chance of education to all, and the wrong which the rich may do to the poor, and the wrongs made by famine and disease unchecked, and the wrong when cruel and wicked rulers may tax the people for their own pleasure, and the wrong which idle and evil priests do when they frighten the people with calamity from heaven. All these wrongs and many others the young captain talked of, and he said Sun Yat-sen hated them all and told of them in his book which was *The Three Principles of the People*.

Now many of these things Ko-sen did not understand, but he understood them better as he heard more of them. And very well he understood the wrong which women suffer when their feet are bound, for he

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remembered Siu-may, and her pale and patient face, and he understood also the wrong of the priests who had made his parents believe he must be given up, and he thought that for these two wrongs alone would he fight until they were wiped away from his country. And the more he learned and thought and listened to his young captain the more his heart was filled with this noble purpose, that he would serve his country to the end of his life.

Sometimes when there was a free hour in the evening Ko-sen talked of these things to Fah-li, but Fah-li could not feel it as Ko-sen did, and he was restless and he hated the fixed rules of the camp which compelled him to exercise and drill in rain and sun. If to lighten the tedium he played some of his clownish tricks and the young captain saw it he was not pleased and he said to Fah-li :

‘Must you always be clowning, then, even though your country is in peril?’

Moreover, the young captain was always angry with Fah-li because he could not learn to read and could not even remember what the Three Principles were, but must grin and look down his pocked nose when he could

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not answer. And Fah-li said to Ko-sen many times :

‘Let us run away again! Look you, some day we may have to fight in a battle, else what is all this shooting for and this running backward and forward and throwing ourselves down on our bellies, and then we may be killed, and for what?’

‘For our country!’ said Ko-sen proudly.

But Fah-li sniffed. ‘Country? What is it?’ he said. ‘I do not see it nor does it speak to me. No, people are all trying to feed themselves and to play a little and to have a little good time, and they are not thinking of anything else. And if I should be killed for them it would not feed them any more or make them laugh a little more. If I could be free myself and make my way about, at least I could make them merry!’

Then Ko-sen begged him, saying :

‘Stay a little longer for my sake because we are friends!’

And Fah-li, because he loved Ko-sen more than any one and because there was none other whom he did love, having neither father nor mother nor any one of his own, stayed on, grumbling much of the time and

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dejected and finding pleasure in nothing except to hide behind a taller lad when the young captain spoke to them earnestly about their country, and make one face after another to relieve his feelings. This he did or else he cracked the bones in his feet and hands quickly in a way he was able to do, so that the young captain stared to hear the sounds. And when he said, 'What is this noise?' Fah-li made his face empty and innocent even while he cracked his feet and he answered, gravely as any old man, 'Sir and captain, it must be distant guns!'

Then Ko-sen, knowing full well what it was, cast reproachful looks at Fah-li, but he would not speak out, for he loved this merry, careless friend, and in every way Ko-sen tried to shield Fah-li and to cover Fah-li's mistakes.

Now all these months, even almost a whole half year, the young captain had held his soldiers here on the edge of a small city, training them and teaching them, and at last a day came and it was a day glorious with autumn and clean wind blowing the breath of life from the distant sea. On that day the young captain said:

'You are ready, my lads, to join the

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greater army of the revolutionists. Tomorrow we will set forth at dawn and join the regiments which are stationed to the north of us, and with them we will march northward to the great cities of Wuchang and Hankow, which are the very heart of our nation, and they are on the Yangtse river, that is, the river called Son of the Sea, so great and mighty is it.'

All through the tents that night when the young soldiers lay down to sleep, excitement ran like fever. They were to march on, they were to join the great army! Even Fah-li was more happy than he had been in many days and he performed his tricks in the tent when the six of them were alone and they were all gay and full of talk.

Now of all these other five next to Fah-li, Ko-sen liked best Yuan, the rich man's son, and these two became good enough friends, so that Fah-li grew jealous sometimes and he said sulkily more than once :

'Well, Ko-sen, and why should I stay on with you if you like him best and it is he who is your best friend?'

And Ko-sen always soothed Fah-li, saying :
'There is not one whom I like as I do you.'

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‘Even though I cannot talk learnedly of the evils of the rich and the hardships of the poor?’ said Fah-li, grinning.

‘You monkey and son of a monkey!’ returned Ko-sen, and affection would well up in his heart for Fah-li so that he pushed him in play and made as if to fight and spar with him, being ashamed to say, as lads are, all that he felt for his friend.

But on this night after Fah-li had fallen asleep these two older lads, Ko-sen and Yuan, talked together for a long time and their talk was always grave and of what they would do. And Ko-sen asked Yuan curiously :

‘Have you ever seen these foreign oppressors of whom our captain speaks?’

‘Only once,’ answered Yuan. ‘Once I saw a foreigner passing through the street that runs past my father’s house, and he was a fearsome thing to look at. He was twice as tall as men are and he had wool of a red colour on his head and his beard grew red and woolly also and his eyes were as blue as ice and his nose was like the prow of a ship.’

‘What did he do?’ asked Ko-sen with great curiosity and with a quiver of fear at the heart.

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'I only saw him for the moment of passing,' said Yuan. 'I stood at the gate with my grandmother, and when she saw him she pulled me hastily inside and shut the gate lest the foreign devil harm me.'

'Did you hear what evil he did?' persisted Ko-sen.

Yuan hesitated and then he said :

'There were men who said he scattered books about that taught of his religion, but we did not dare to pick them up, and the wind blew the papers hither and thither through the town. But with such looks as his, one believes anything of him. And surely our young captain knows when he says they have oppressed us and stolen from us what was ours of the land by the sea and the river.'

And to this young man this seemed the greatest of evils, for his father was rich and owned land in his own name

When dawn came, and it came quickly on that day, so late had these two talked into the night, the bugle blew and the young soldiers leaped up, and on that day they had their breakfasts first and then they set out on their march, their bedding strapped on their backs, and on their feet they wore straw

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sandals to ease their feet in walking instead of their usual coarse leathern shoes. But before they marched they bowed before the picture of their dead leader, and Ko-sen gazed ardently at that face and made his vow of steadfastness silently in his heart.

And the dawn of that day was clear, and the sun came up mighty and golden over the rice fields that were turning yellow in the harvest, and the wind blew sweet and chill upon the faces of the young soldiers. Then Ko-sen set himself to the march, and his heart lifted itself and he marched on with all his young strength to set his country free.

VIII

THEREAFTER they marched for many days and Ko-sen saw his country as he had never seen it before. They marched over rough country roads rutted with loaded wheelbarrows carrying produce into cities, and rough with the footprints of caravans of donkeys. They marched between fields of standing grain and they marched between shorn fields where early rice had been cut and where harvesters looked up at them from threshing-floors, their flails still for a moment to watch the soldiers pass. And sometimes one called out :

‘Soldiers, where do you go, and is there to be war again, and are we never to have peace so that we can cultivate our fields and eat and not have to pay out all in taxes for wars about we know not what?’

Then the young captain would call back stoutly as he marched :

‘This time we fight for you, O working-

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man, and when we have fought, you shall be free ! ’

But sometimes when they stopped at noon at a country inn to eat and drink and to rest, Ko-sen saw looks of hatred given them from the people there as though they were afraid, and some muttered, ‘ Soldiers again ! We have had enough of them stealing and robbing and demanding to share what little we have ourselves ! ’ And many said, ‘ Men do not take good iron to make nails nor good men to make soldiers ! ’

And so Ko-sen was angry to hear such things as these, but still he could not reply, for well he remembered in his own town that only the idle and the worthless joined the armies of the war-lords, and that it was true that all of the people in town and village feared the coming of soldiers, for they took what they liked everywhere and paid nothing in return except angry, ruthless looks and brutal curses. Then the young captain said to his men :

‘ Men, you are not as other common soldiers who fight for money. You belong to the revolutionary army who must set the people free. See to it that you do not rob and steal and oppress privately the ones

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we are to help. So conduct yourselves that every one will see that you are revolutionists and true followers of Sun Yat-sen, who loved the common people !'

And the young captain gave to each of them a little money that each might pay for what he needed.

Thus they went, on day after day. Sometimes they marched through cities and over cobbled streets, and on either side were rich shops, and the produce of all the world was there to be had if a man could pay for it. For the first time in his life Ko-sen saw a clock, and he did not know what it was until he asked Yuan, who was a rich man's son and had seen a clock in his father's house. For the first time also Ko-sen saw carriages drawn by horses, and twice he saw carriages drawn by nothing, neither beast nor man, but moved mysteriously from within by some power—spirit-carts, they are called, Yuan told him—and Ko-sen was proud to think that his country had all these things.

As for Fah-li, he was enchanted with the streets and he cast great eyes of longing about him and he whispered to Ko-sen :

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‘ We could slip away here and none find us again in all these winding ways ! ’

But something held Ko-sen now from his heart and he shook his head and seized Fah-li’s hand firmly, and so they still marched on together.

Rich and poor, city and village, his country unrolled itself before his eyes, and Ko-sen’s heart swelled with pride and to himself he said :

‘ Shall I not fight against any who seek to take this fair land from us ? From this day on I am a love-country man ! ’

By night they halted in villages if they could, and always the young captain led them straight to a temple to shelter there, saying that thus for once might these useless buildings be of use. The first time they entered a temple Ko-sen had felt a shudder of remembered fear run through his blood, and he shrank a little before the four guardian gods that stand at the entrance to temples, and he knew again the chill of the old and shadowed halls when he stepped within.

But he saw his captain enter carelessly and boldly and demand space and food for them all, and his captain did not even so

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much as see the gods except to cast scornful looks at them. Once he stopped in front of the great gilt Buddha that sits upon his golden lotus in the central hall of such temples, and he prodded the god's fat belly with his bayonet, and under the glittering gilt there was only clay. Then the young captain turned to his soldiers and he said :

‘ Some day you will see every such old laughing fool as this crumbled and fallen into the earth again,’ and he spat upon the ground, and in the middle of the god's belly a bit of the gold fell off, though the god only smiled on as before.

But when the captain had passed, Ko-sen saw an old and wrinkled priest hurry forth silently and he picked up the flake of gilt and clay and he quickly put it back and pressed it into its hole, and he lit a stick of fresh incense in the urn that stood on the altar before the god, and he lit the two red candles there, and he knelt and bowed his head to the ground before the Buddha as though he would make amends for what had been done. And the old priest gazed lovingly at the god with whom he had lived many years and he murmured :

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‘We are helpless in these days against such as these, O holy Buddha, but do thou avenge thyself!’ And he bowed again and was silent in prayer.

But after they had slept many days in temples Ko-sen learned to enter them carelessly also, and to set his gun against a god carelessly and as though it were nothing but part of the house, and he could rest and sleep and forget that once a temple had been a prison to him, and he learned to repeat what the young captain said, ‘Let these useless buildings shelter us who are come to save the people, and let these idle priests give us of their food that they have taken from the people and we will pay them nothing, for it is ours by right.’ And Ko-sen learned to speak loudly and carelessly to a priest and to demand with arrogance what he wanted—hot water for washing and tea when he would have it.

Once when he did so the old abbot of a certain temple, in which they took shelter during three days of storm, in passing heard him, and the abbot stopped and looked earnestly at Ko-sen, hearing his lordly young voice, and he spoke out quietly and as though half to himself :

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‘Young man, who are you in the temple of my gods?’

And Ko-sen answered, determined not to be abashed:

‘I am a revolutionist and one of the revolutionist army!’

‘Ah?’ replied the abbot very gently. ‘Then you are one of those who take our gods from us.’

‘Yes!’ said Ko-sen defiantly, gazing back into the old man’s serene eyes.

‘And will you give us new ones?’ asked the old man; and again he asked, ‘And will you give us new ones?’

‘No! We do not believe in gods,’ said Ko-sen. ‘Gods are evil because they are false, and they are used by priests to deceive the people and make them afraid to do for themselves. We do not need gods!’

‘Ah?’ said the old abbot again, and he shook his head. ‘How young you are, my child! How young are these!’ he murmured half to himself. ‘They do not understand that men will have gods of some kind, and when old ones are gone they will build themselves new ones—yes, yes, so young—knowing nothing’—and he passed on to his inner room and Ko-sen stood

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staring after him, not understanding at all what the old man meant.

But after that when the soldier lads for their fun made merry with the silent¹ gods and twisted off their clay fingers and prodded them with their bayonets and made holes in their earthen bodies, Ko-sen did not do these things, although if any had asked him why, he could not have said why he did not.

Once they came to a village where there was no temple and the inn was small and full of guests, for the autumn weather had changed to a sudden wintry chill, and the young captain looked about on his two hundred hungry lads and he turned to the innkeeper and he said :

‘ I must shelter these somewhere this night, for the night is too cold to sleep in a field as we might do in summer. Is there no temple of any kind in this village, and how is it you do not worship something here ? ’

The innkeeper hesitated then—an old pockmarked fellow he was, with a dirty apron and with one eye gone—and at last he said :

‘ As for me, I have no time for worship

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except a little incense on a feast day before the paper god pasted on the wall of my middle room. But once we had a temple in this village and it went out of business because there came a Jesus-man here and he opened a worship hall, and at first no one would go to it, but he lived here a good man and quiet enough, and during the famine year eight years back he got money from foreign parts and fed many, and since then people have turned to his hall and they have made the temple into a school where he teaches our children what he has of learning.'

'We will go to this worship hall of his, then, and take shelter there,' said the captain angrily. 'These halls are the places foreigners use to beguile our people and they are more evil than the temples!'

And he marshalled his lads and they marched through the dark and chilly night to a little street where a low brick house stood among others, and it was distinguished from these others by an oil lamp hung over its gate, and the light from this lamp illumined these words carved into a stone set over the gate, 'The Hall of Good Tidings.'

Then the young captain struck the gate with his gun and he pointed at the words

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and he said scornfully, ' See how these words deceive our people ! ' And he beat on the door and it opened easily, for it was never locked.

Then all of them marched into a small court and into a hall that was not like a temple at all, being full of light from lamps hanging from the ceilings and of air from many windows. There were benches here and there and at one end a small table for the one who spoke there, and along one wall a long table of books and papers and benches beside the table for those who wished to sit and read. On the whitewashed walls hung many pictures and words written out on the pictures, and Ko-sen looked at these curiously, as did all of the young soldiers. But the young captain cried out :

' Let no one read or look at these things, for they are enemies to our country ! ' And he went about the room and tore down everything that hung there, and as he tore furiously they heard a cough, and there watching them from the doorway stood an old and peaceful looking man with a sparse white beard hanging against his bosom. When the young captain saw him he shouted out :

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We take shelter here, old man, for this place belongs to us by rights, although you, running dog of a foreigner, have seized it and use it to deceive my people ! ’

The old man listened to this and then answered mildly :

‘ I have deceived no one, young man. All here in this village know me that I am named Yang and come from the city of Lo-yang, and I have lived here many years. I am a Christian, it is true, but running dog of none save Jesus, whose slave I proudly am. You may shelter here. Even if I did not allow it you would force me, seeing I am old and alone. But I receive you willingly enough, for all may come here who wish, and the gate is locked against none.’

And if the old man saw the torn pictures he said nothing of them but stood looking tranquilly and fearlessly from one face to another. Then the young captain said roughly :

‘ Well I know these tricks of your trade, and you need not try your mock goodness on my men, who are revolutionists, for we hate all deception. Begone and do not speak to any of them ! We leave at dawn.’

And he stood at the gate until the old man

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was gone, and he forbade any of the young soldiers to look at anything or read anything, and that night he stood at the table after they had eaten of the food ordered from the inn, and from there the young captain talked to them as was his wont, and he talked with more fervour and more anger than ever he had and it seemed he took delight in it and he said :

‘ My men, I stand here where the hated foreign religion has been preached to our people, and I stand here to tell you that you must never falter until every hall like this is torn down or given over to the people for schools and all foreign priests and dogs of foreign priests like that old man killed and driven from the land they invade. And from every preaching place let a revolutionist stand and tell the people, “ You have been deceived long enough—away with all the gods ”.’

And he unrolled the picture they took with them everywhere and he set it upon the wall where that other picture had been and he said in a loud clear voice :

‘ Here is our leader and him only ! ’ And he bowed deeply to this picture.

Then suddenly and strangely there came

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to Ko-sen's mind some resemblance to a thing he had seen before, and he thought that so did the priest bow before the pricked god in the temple, and he remembered unwillingly and half-understanding now what the old abbot had said, 'And men will make themselves new gods, if the old gods are gone, for men will have gods.' Then he reproached himself and with the others he bowed also to the picture.

But in the night, sleeping on the floor of the worship hall, Fah-li whispered to Ko-sen:

'I looked at one of the pictures when the captain's back was turned. Ko-sen, it was the picture of a man hanging on a piece of wood—a very sad and sorrowful sight, and his face was kind and not angry as he hung there. What do you think it meant?'

And Ko-sen, hearing it, thought to himself that Fah-li was incorrigible and for ever one who must do what he was told not to do, and he said impatiently:

'How am I to be friend to you if you are for ever doing what you should not, and if you had been discovered all my pleading would not have helped, so greatly does our captain hate foreign gods.'

But still Ko-sen thought a moment before

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he slept that the picture was a strange one, for not in any temple had he seen any god who suffered at all.

Thus they went marching on, and at last a vast city loomed out of a wide and plain-like valley, and this was the city where they were to join the greater army. First they saw its wall rising against the sky, its jagged lines cut like a fortress against the clear blue. Then the road led them upon a hill and they could look down into the great circle of the wall, and there were thousands upon thousands of dark-tiled roofs heaped upon one another like the scales of some mighty fish, and there arose a deep humming noise out of the city, for the narrow and winding streets were crowded with people and with trade of every kind. The camp to which they were to go from this hill was on the north side of the city just outside the walls in a Confucian temple there, and so they must march straight through the city to reach it.

It was high noon when they came down the hill and started on the last miles of their march, and the sun beat down unexpectedly warm on a late autumn day. They

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entered the south gate under the wall and there in the shade the captain ordered them to rest a little, for they had been walking since early dawn and they were all very weary. Here in this long, tunnel-like arch under the thick wall it was cool, and vendors of late fruits and nuts and sweets sat there with their wares, and the lads were hungry and bargained eagerly for this and that. And some of the vendors were fearful of them and unwilling to sell until they saw the money first and had it put into their hands even, and Ko-sen wished to buy an orange of such an one, for he was thirsty, and her hesitation made him angry.

‘We are not common soldiers,’ he said proudly. ‘We are soldiers of the revolution and we pay for what we buy.’

But the old woman shook her head and sniffed somewhat, and said :

‘Show me the money and put it here on my palm. I have heard talk of these soldiers for the revolution and one of them owes me this ten-month for things he buys, and I shall never see the colour of his money, whether silver or copper, and well I know it, and so now when I see him coming I take my basket and go before he comes.’

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‘Now, old dame,’ said a man near by who had two baskets of dates slung on a pole over his shoulder, ‘the soldiers of the revolution are better than the others and it is not possible that every man in any army or in any place can be wholly good. Some evil ones there must be, or else why hope for heaven later?’

But the old woman would not be changed and she grumbled on as she searched among her oranges for what would please Ko-sen and yet be not larger than she wished, and she said :

‘Well, but they are not so good as they say and their talk is more than they can do, and soldiers are soldiers and nothing more and I am too old to be fooled.’

Then Ko-sen turned from her bitterly and in his impatient heart he thought :

‘How ungrateful are they to us who have pledged our lives to them—these common men and women—and they should believe in us!’

And Ko-sen would have liked to have compelled the old woman to believe what he told her but he could not, and in his impatience he threw his money at her for the orange and some fell on the ground and

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she stooped patiently to pick it up and felt for it to the last copper penny as though this were a thing that many did when they bought from her, and still she was glad of the money at any cost. Then Ko-sen, seeing her stoop thus and search anxiously, was ashamed, but he would not acknowledge it even to himself; but his orange was not so sweet to him as it might have been.

Then on they marched through the city and out of the north gate on the other side, and there was the great Confucian temple and there everywhere were soldiers, and Ko-sen and Fah-li stared and thought that never in their lives had they seen so many men together. It was the hour after noon when the men were all at ease and they lounged everywhere along the road and in the courts of the temple and about the gates, and they were idling and laughing and eating peanuts and fruits and they looked at the band of weary young men who marched silently in and a running whisper ran over them, and Ko-sen heard one say to another :

‘ Here is a band of babes ! ’

But Ko-sen turned at this, weary as he was, and he said proudly :

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‘ Yet are we soldiers of the revolution ! ’

Then they followed their young captain straight through the temple courts and into the innermost court and into the innermost hall of that court, and there the young captain halted. And he turned to them there and - he said, with great earnestness and quiet passion :

‘ My men, I am about to present you to the great general, the head of our revolution, he who was taught of our revered leader himself and has stood by him in many battles. I present you, and do you salute as I have taught you, every one.’ Then he looked sternly at Fah-li and he added, ‘ Let there be no clownishness anywhere, else will I take that one out behind the temple and shoot him for an unfaithful dog and unworthy ! ’

Never had one of the lads heard such words as these from their captain and they were all startled and a hush of silence fell on them and they followed carefully and regularly after their captain and not one so much as whispered. Then they were led into a great hall and their captain halted there and he cried in a great voice :

‘ Salute ! ’

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And every one saluted, and Ko-sen, looking straight ahead of him, saw a man sitting at a table writing. He wore a uniform of khaki cloth, and the sword, which he had slipped from his belt, lay on the table but still ready to his hand. He did not look up for a moment and Ko-sen saw his face : so stern, absorbed, hard, grave. Most of all was the mouth grave and set. Then he looked up suddenly and bowed a little, and Ko-sen could see his eyes, sharp, clear, fixed in their gaze.

‘These?’ he asked suddenly.

‘Sir and my general!’ answered the young captain in a loud, clear voice, ‘to you and my country I present—my men!’

IX

NOW Ko-sen soon found that they were not the only young soldiers in the army of the revolution. From many places many scores like themselves had been gathered in preparation for the great march northward. Indeed, this big army which they had joined seemed made up first of young men under twenty and a little more, and then of old and seasoned soldiers who had fought under other banners and under other leaders and for causes far different, even the causes of money and plunder for themselves and for the personal power and gain of some war-lord.

These older soldiers would never learn to march and to shoot as swiftly and eagerly as the young men did. To them war was an old story and it was a way to make a living and they worked at it as little as they dared. They spent their time on the streets in buying this and that and in making free with pretty working-girls, and these were

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the ones of whom the vendors had complained that they took what they wanted and paid with promises or blows.

As for Ko-sen, when he saw all this he was the more scrupulous himself in all his behaviour. It was an agony to him that there could be one in the revolutionary army who was dishonest or careless and given to lazy eating and drinking and thievish ways. And as if to atone for them he studied and learned to control his body well and he grew hard and strong and quick, and one day the young captain called to him and said :

‘ Ko-sen, you have done better than any of the others and I shall make you head over ten men, and every day you must drill them and teach them what you know in preparation for the great day of battle. To Yuan also I shall give ten, for he is next to you.’

Then Ko-sen was mightily proud and he thought swiftly :

‘ Oh, that my father and mother could see me now ! ’ And he thought on and then he said aloud, ‘ Sir and my captain, if I may I should like to ask one favour only, and it is that my brother Fah-li may be among my ten, for well I know his weaknesses, but he

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has a good heart and he will listen to me as to no other.'

And the young captain granted him this, and so Ko-sen was able in this way to shield Fah-li from the censure that he might have had from a strange leader, and Fah-li never thought of being jealous of Ko-sen but admired him more than ever, and he tried hard to do all that a soldier must. Nevertheless, Ko-sen saw somewhat sadly that with all the teaching in the world Fah-li would never make a soldier, and it would have been better truly if he could have been freed and allowed to roam over the world as he wished to do, making people laugh.

Three months did Ko-sen stay with the army in the Confucian temple. Now, the temples to Confucius are not like other temples, for they have no clay and gilded gods in them as the others have, but only tablets to the Great Sage and to his closest disciples. On the walls are written the wise sayings that he spoke when he was on earth twenty-five hundred years ago.

But even these wise sayings the revolutionists did not revere and Ko-sen heard soldiers say, 'Confucius is dead and his

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bones are dust, and dust the fine things he said that have not put rice into the mouths of the hungry ! ' And they drove nails into the tablets set in the walls of the temple, and they hung their clothing on the nails and their swords, and if they rode horses, then their riding-gear, and no one read the good words.

But one day Ko-sen read them and he read a saying which was this, ' Do not unto others as you would not wish them to do to you,' and there was another which said, ' Around the four seas all men are brothers.' The more Ko-sen thought of these words the more he thought them good, although no one else paid heed to them, and so he said to the young captain once when they were in the temple court in an hour of ease :

' Sir and my captain, why is it we are not to believe what the old sage said ? '

And the young captain said gravely and as one who knows all things :

' These sayings are old and useless and do not serve the day. We have our cause and we must treat ruthlessly all who oppose it. Most of all we are not to believe that men in the whole world are brothers, for our

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enemies are men and how can we call them our brothers? No, first of all we must set up our own country and we must be against all such as are not our countrymen. This is called nationalism, and Sun Yat-sen says nationalism must come first.'

So when the young captain used the name of Sun Yat-sen, Ko-sen gave over his thinking and he believed what he was told.

Then suddenly, suddenly as orders always came to them, the army was told one evening that at dawn the great march northward began, to conquer that north for the revolutionists and take it away from the old warlords who held it for their own, and all through the great temple there was stir and talk and confusion, and every soldier examined his shoes and his sandals and his gun and all that he had to carry. That night the men were given meat for their supper and they ate well and slept early.

The next morning when the sky was still black the bugles blew lustily and the men staggered up out of their sleep and the march began, for they were to march five miles and then eat. And Ko-sen mustered his ten and at their head he marched proudly,

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proud because they were all young and strong and red-cheeked, being for the most part country boys, the eldest not yet sixteen, and Fah-li the youngest, so that Ko-sen was older than any. Fah-li Ko-sen kept just behind himself, lest the lad yield to temptation and fall out of step or do some childish thing. One of the most difficult things for Fah-li was the long, regular stride of the soldier which must be kept to hour after hour. Fah-li's steps by nature were irregular, now swift, now slow, as his eyes moved from this to that of what he saw in passing. It was torture to him to keep step with others, but now he tried for Ko-sen's sake.

So they set out on their long march that dawn, and as they marched the sky broke into streaks of gold and the day came, and then they halted at a village for breakfast. Now, one of the strangest sights that Ko-sen was to see anywhere was at this village where they halted, and it was a regiment of young women who were come to join the revolutionary army and most of them were very young. He looked at them with curiosity and astonishment, as indeed all the men did. They wore grey uniforms just as other soldiers did, but their hair was cut off straight

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about their necks, and their feet were all whole and large and when they marched they marched as men did and as swiftly.

Watching them, Ko-sen thought of Siu-may leaning on her bamboo staff and he looked again at these, free and swift-moving, and he said to himself, exulting in his cause :

‘ It is like this with us revolutionists ! ’

And he was angry when Fah-li snickered at them and pointed with his finger at the big, strong feet of the young women, bare in straw sandals, and Ko-sen rebuked Fah-li thus :

‘ These are revolutionists also and they are equal to us.’

Now in the evenings when the army halted there was talk everywhere of coming battle. The young soldiers talked of the enemy and where he was and how they would fight when they found him, and the old soldiers told gory tales of hacking and slicing and shooting men, and some of them told how at times they had been bandits and had even eaten human hearts, for, they said, who eats the heart of a brave enemy takes into himself that bravery. And always these old soldiers said that the best part of

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the battle was at the end when they had been allowed by the war-lords under whose banners they fought to loot what they liked in a conquered territory so that they might fight the more eagerly next time in hope of more loot.

And Ko-sen, hearing once a leering and battle-scarred old soldier talking thus and telling how he robbed screaming and defenceless women of their jewels and clothing and of what he did and how he ate and drank with what he robbed, grew sick to hear it all, for he knew well enough how the good common people feared and hated such as this old soldier and how they had suffered in times past, even in his own country-side, and Ko-sen cried out in his anger and said to the old soldier :

‘We revolutionists may not do such things—we who are come to help and to deliver the common people, we may not plunder them !’

Then the old soldier looked around to see who spoke against him so boldly, and seeing Ko-sen was but a young fellow he laughed out and spat upon the ground and wagged his head and he said :

‘Listen to a young saint teach an old

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sinner ! Why, I was a soldier and a-soldiering before you were born on the earth, and therefore shut your baby mouth ! ’

And the old soldier grew rough and knotted his fists to fight and Ko-sen was ready and sprang at him, but others pulled them apart and would not let it be so, and Ko-sen had to swallow his anger. But he held himself yet more proudly and he talked to his ten men and he said savagely to them :

‘ If I see one of you after the battle so much as take a penny or so much as seize a common rice-bowl I will shoot you for a traitor to the cause ! ’ And he glared at them all with his eyes so great that they were frightened and promised him.

Thus the straggling great army moved on day after day, and everywhere their leaders asked of the farmers along the country-side :

‘ Where is our enemy gone, and when did he pass you here ? ’

And the country people answered half sullenly, ‘ They have gone northward many days ago and you will not catch them. ’

Then the revolutionists sang their song of victory and they tore down everywhere the flags they saw with five bars of colours

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across them, which was the enemy's emblem, and they put up instead the flags of the revolution and above them Sun Yat-sen's picture. In every little schoolhouse they put these flags and in every church and temple.

And many times, if the mood was on them, some in the army would tear the gods out of these temples and in the churches; if the mood was on them they would tear down the signs of the Cross and they would use the altars for tables and they slept on the benches and they even befouled the preaching-places and then they marched on. But Ko-sen, although he hated the gods well enough, could not do these things because of some fastidiousness in himself, and he would not allow his men to take any share in such doing. And partly he was thus because there were those who still believed in these things.

Once when some of the men so despoiled a little village church which held aloft over the preaching-place a small wooden cross, a young man stood there watching, smiling bitterly, and his arms folded upon his bosom. Ko-sen, seeing him thus, turned to him and said :

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‘ Who are you ? ’

And the young man answered :

‘ I am the teacher in this place, and with much effort and the work of my hands I gathered enough to build this place to the one true God who is the Father of Men.’

And Ko-sen said curiously :

‘ Yet your speech is learned and you sound like one who knows books, and do you still ignorantly believe in gods ? ’

And the man said :

‘ No, but in God.’

And Ko-sen said :

‘ What will you do now, seeing the house is gone ? ’

And the man answered most steadfastly :

‘ I will build it up again.’

But not all were so brave as he, neither in temple nor church, and there were some who were false to their faith because they were afraid.

Such an one did Ko-sen see one day when their captain led them to rest in a church in a certain city, and when they entered there was a fat fellow standing there preaching to some people, and when he saw the soldiers he turned clay colour and came to meet them fawning and smiling, and when

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some of the soldiers laughed at him and made as if to prick him with their bayonets he squalled with fear. When they told him to take down the painted cross on the wall above where he had stood to preach he made haste to tear it down, and when a ribald soldier cried out :

‘Trample on it, you running dog of the foreigners !’ the fat fellow trampled on it, shivering and stammering.

Then the young captain, leaning on his gun and watching this, turned to his soldiers and said, a bitter smile on his face :

‘You see of what stuff such are made and why they should be destroyed !’

And Ko-sen was scornful also, for while he did not believe himself, he despised those who forsook their belief from fear and not from reason.

Thus they went on for many days and every day each man asked himself, ‘Is to-day the great battle ?’ But day passed into night and night opened again to new day and still they marched over the country-side and through village and city and still they halted at night tired and hungry, and sometimes Ko-sen grew weary and discouraged.

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At such times he thought of the old and peaceful life on his father's little farm and of the gentle passing of time there and he longed exceedingly to see his parents and Siu-may and hear them talk once more.

But he did not dare even to write a letter to them, for his father could not read, and when he wished to know what was written on paper he had always to go to the temple and ask a priest what the letters were. And Ko-sen, although he knew the power of the priests could not search him out so far as this, was yet unwilling that they should know where and what he was. Then, thinking of that temple and what his life would have been there, he looked about him at the rolling country and he breathed the free air and he looked up at the starry sky, and he said to himself gratefully :

'It is better as it is. I am free and I have work to do.'

And he looked forward the more eagerly to the day of battle.

One day as they marched he saw on the horizon far ahead of them a broad glittering and stretched out wide and smooth and shining, and Ko-sen wondered what it was

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and he asked an old soldier who marched in front of him,

‘What is that glittering at the edge of the sky?’

And the old soldier, to whom nothing was new, said carelessly :

‘That is nothing but the river.’

‘Is it the great river?’ asked Ko-sen eagerly.

‘Aye,’ said the old man, yawning and squinting at the sun to see how near noon it was and when he might hope for food and drink and rest for his legs.

Ko-sen asked no more then but he walked on more firmly, his eyes glowing. The great river, beyond which their enemy was, the Yangtse, Son of the Sea, which comes rushing down from a thousand streams out of mountains and plains, and which cuts its way through gorges chill and icy and spreads at last into a vast, deep, powerful river, quiet until it comes to the sea! He had heard of it, for it is one of the glories of that country, the dividing line between north and south, the north that eats wheat and the south that eats rice. He had heard of it, but he had never seen it.

Steadily the river widened and by dusk

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they had reached it and were encamped beside it. Ko-sen went to it and peered over the banks into the water. It was not shining now but yellow and dark with the earth it had torn away from the land through which it had come, wide and deep and yellow like a yellow sea, so that when he looked across this river in the twilight he could not see the farther side. But beyond it, somewhere, was the enemy !

X

THEY marched three days along the edge of this great river, and Ko-sen thought he had never seen so entrancing a sight as boats upon the water. There was every sort of boat to be seen, and when the army halted at noon and at night, Ko-sen sped over the fields and the flat shore land to the water's edge, and Fah-li panted behind him, and then they stood together staring at all that was before them.

Both of them were inland lads who had never seen more water than can be collected in a pond or that can flow between the narrow dikes of a small and indolent canal where only little boats may go and these towed along the shore by a rope tied to the mast at one end and the other end slung over a man's shoulder as he walks on the dike. But here on this river the boatmen harnessed the wind to their sails, and on these windy days of early winter, and when the sun shone on full-spread sails, the boats

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were so beautiful that Ko-sen's heart was lifted out of his body nearly, and he thought exultantly :

‘ It is true that there is no country as fair as mine and none with such beautiful ships ! ’

Sometimes a steamer would come rushing past in a path of foam so that against the bank where they stood waves would leap up and splash over the banks and wet them with spray as they stood, and Fah-li laughed to feel the water on his face, and Ko-sen longed to know what secret power made this ship sail so fast.

Then seeing every kind of ship that was there, junk and steamship and row-boat and little painted sampans which one man paddles and which have great eyes painted on their prows so that when they drift along they look like gay water insects, and fishing-boats swarming with flocks of cormorants, and great and heavy cargo-boats which are filled with coal and grain from the mountains, and rafts of logs and bamboo which float down from the inner provinces with whole families encamped upon them for the many months they need to drift down to the big port cities, Ko-sen said to himself that he would like to live always by the river

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and watch this marvel of life that went on there, and he and Fah-li argued as to which boat they would choose each for his own if he could choose. And Fah-li said :

‘I would choose a little fishing-boat like this one here by the shore where a man sits and ever so often he lets down that great square net and hauls it up again after a while, and there are silver fish in it that he can dip out easily. Think of eating fish every day in the year, and not little pond fish full of bones, but big river fish such as only the rich may eat !’

And even as he spoke, the fisherman came forward and pulled at the rope to the net and slowly the great wide net rose and there in its pit were four enormous, wriggling fish flashing in the sunshine, and many small ones besides. Then the man seized the great fat fish in his hands, holding each tightly about the middle, and he threw them all into the bottom of the boat. But the little ones he lifted out with a dipper fastened to the end of a long bamboo and tossed them back into the yellow water to grow a while.

Ko-sen watched all this and then he said :
‘It is well enough, but as for me I would

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choose a big junk and I would set all sails a-flying and I would sail down the river and to the sea. 'There is the very one I would choose if I could !' He pointed to a great junk in full sail flying before the wind.

Just as he spoke there came a craft up the river such as they had never seen before. It was a long, low-lying vessel, dark and grey and ugly. Ko-sen stared at it in wonder. It was a steamship, for it had no sails, and heavy black smoke poured out of its funnels. Even in the bright sharp sunshine it did not look other than it was, dark and powerful and angry. It went ruthlessly on its way and from its iron sides great guns pointed out towards the shores.

'Now what is this for a ship?' said Ko-sen wondering, and he and Fah-li stared on until it went swiftly out of sight. And so great were the waves it made that all the little fishing-boats rocked and the sampans danced about like shells and even the biggest junks heaved up and down. The fishermen ran forward to hold their nets steady and he cried out :

'Ha, the accursed foreign thing !'

And Ko-sen could not forget this ship and when he went back to the camp he asked

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his captain what it was. And the young captain frowned and said :

‘That? That was a foreign warship doubtless. Did you see what flag it carried on its tail?’

‘No,’ said Ko-sen, ‘except that I saw the colours red and blue and white as it went past and the flag streamed out in the wind.’

‘That is foreign,’ replied the young captain. ‘Those are the ships of which I have told you that foreigners send into our rivers that they may shoot us. Hate them—hate them, lad! Down with our enemies!’

And Ko-sen remembered the sullen, pointing guns and he hated them with all his heart and he said that when he could he would kill every foreigner that brought such ships into his rivers as these. And as he sat thinking such thoughts his young captain spoke again and he said :

‘This is a good time to tell you, Ko-sen. Do not speak to your men yet, for it will be time to tell them two days from now. The great battle will be on the third day from this!’

Ships and river and all were not in Ko-sen’s mind these three days. Battle! He

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could not sleep in his tent for thinking of it, and when he ate, the rice was dry in his mouth. His ten lads he kept busy polishing and oiling their guns and he made them practise again and again at shooting, and he drilled them and taught them over and over how to drop to the ground and shoot from behind a hillock or an old grave such as were everywhere. As for the lads, they complained bitterly because he worked them so hard. But Ko-sen did not listen to their complaining. He was in a sweat of fear lest there be anything of which they might be ignorant. These ten lives he felt were dependent on him and he taught them everything he knew.

On the second day the general himself talked to the assembled soldiers and himself told them that the great battle was at hand, and he adjured them for love of country and for the sake of their great leader to fight bravely against their common enemy. And as he talked, Fah-li, who stood beside Ko-sen, whispered to him :

‘ Who is the enemy, Ko-sen, and how shall I know him in battle ? Will he have white skin ? ’

And Ko-sen was much troubled by this

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question, and afterward he talked to Fah-li and he told him that this time the enemy was not yet the foreigner but it was the men of the north who would not join the revolutionists but who abide by the old despotic war-lords who rule the country selfishly and for themselves only. But Fah-li said uncertainly :

‘ Yes, but if their skin and hair are like ours, how shall I know them as enemies, and I might kill one of our own men and not know it.’

Then Ko-sen was very much troubled, for he did not know how to answer this and he could only say :

‘ Then you must kill any who oppose us and whose speech sounds guttural and like the northern speech. I don’t know any other way.’

But Fah-li was dejected and his round, pocked face was without a smile and he said half-whispering :

‘ Ko-sen, I doubt it will go well, and I have a feeling that somehow it will not and I half wish I had stayed priest. How can I kill, and what if I am killed first ? ’

Then Ko-sen comforted him and tried to repeat some of the teachings the young

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captain had given them, but all the time he thought with a great fear, 'What indeed if this friend of mine, my brother friend, should come to harm?' And it was the first time that Ko-sen had an understanding of what battle could mean and he went away by himself behind the tent and in that night before battle he was deeply afraid, but he could not help it.

At last he went to bed and he could not sleep until nearly dawn, and it seemed to him he had but just fallen to sleep when he heard the bugle, harsh and strident through the early air, and he leaped up and gathered his ten together, himself shivering with excitement and fear. So did he shiver that he could hardly speak to them but must close his teeth down on his words, and he said over and over again, 'How cold it is—how cold it is,' that this might explain his shivering, of which he was ashamed.

But somehow he gathered his ten and somehow he marched at their head and to the field and to his captain, and then he said, anxiously :

'Where are we to be placed, sir and my captain?'

Out of the grey dawn the young captain's

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eyes glittered as a man's eyes do when he is half insane, and he answered as though he did not know who Ko-sen was :

‘ In the front—in the very front——’

‘ *In the front?* ’ cried Ko-sen in horror. ‘ But, oh, my captain, think how young my ten are—we have not fought before. I thought the old ones would lead the way and we follow who have not fought——’

Suddenly Ko-sen stopped. He saw himself and his ten little young lads and one of them Fah-li—Fah-li in front where the enemy's first guns would pierce him through and through, Fah-li who could never get his gun to fire as it should and to this day shut his eyes when he pulled the trigger ! Ko-sen's teeth began to chatter and he stood before his captain, imploring. But the young captain was impatient and bitter.

‘ Obey orders ! ’ he shouted. ‘ The general says, the new troops to the front ! ’ Then seeing Ko-sen's face he seemed to come to himself and he said hastily, ‘ Lad, the old men will not go to the front—they are ill-disciplined—the battle comes a month before we are ready, I know, but we must do as we can and not fail our general. We young ones have the courage and the daring

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—let us lead the way!’ His eyes fired again and he shouted, ‘Man, let us show that we young revolutionists fear nothing for the sake of the cause! Marshal your men!’

Then Ko-sen caught this fire from his captain and he wheeled, gave the order to his ten and they pressed forward and passed the ranks of old soldiers who stood at ease in the dark dawn, staring sullenly and curiously as the young men swung past them.

When the army was ready for battle and the call came to march forward, Ko-sen and his ten lads stood in the front line and in front of every one of his ten stood Ko-sen and he looked ahead straightly and gravely and his eyes met the steadfast eyes of his captain looking into his.

XI

... **W**AS this battle, then—this roaring of voices—this thunder of guns—this running and stumbling and confusion—this sobbing and feeling for the trigger of his gun—this sweeping to and fro of soldiers in such thousands that there was no telling who or what any was? Once and once again Ko-sen heard his captain's voice shouting to them to move forward—to move forward—and then he never heard it any more.

He struggled to obey that voice, to keep his ten together, to keep them moving forward, and then there was suddenly a blinding puff of smoke and dust and two of his lads lay writhing upon the earth, and while he stayed, transfixed with horror to see what had befallen them, the others had been swept on in the moving masses of men, and he was left there with his two dead lads.

He began to sob without knowing what

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he did, and sobbing and cursing the enemy who had done this he fell to cramming the bullets in his gun again and he ran on and on, sobbing and calling to the eight that were left to him. But he never found them, and there was not one to guide him in all that day and he seemed lost among the shouting madness of the men about him.

But he pressed on. He pressed on and was pushed back and torn hither and thither in the running, howling mob. The hard and brilliant sky grew obscured with smoke and dust. The ammunition was gone from his belt. There were dead men everywhere upon the ground, and worse than the dead were those who were dying and afraid and weeping and screaming.

But pushing on over them as though they were less than the earth the revolutionary army moved on, foot by foot, and Ko-sen through all that day pushed with them, thinking no more of his ten or of himself or even of Fah-li, but striving only in a great daze.

When night came bugles were blown with great blasts of triumph, and everywhere the word ran from mouth to mouth, 'Victory! We have the victory!'

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Victory! Ko-sen, hearing that word, threw down his gun at last that had been so long useless, and he looked about him in the twilight as one looks out on a strange and unfamiliar country. He was stupid with the noise and the horror of the day. Over the hummocky ground of the battle-field lay the many dead, dim in the dusk of evening.

There, not more than four feet from him, a young man lay smiling and dead, a country man as one could see from his broad, simple face. Ko-sen went a little nearer to him and stared down at him. The man lay with one arm under his head as though he were asleep. He had no gun but only a blunt, old-fashioned sword such as country men may have in their homes to defend themselves from bandits in bad times. He wore a coarse and simple blue uniform that was not that of the revolutionary army. It was the sign of the enemy. . . .

Was this his enemy, then, whom he had pursued, this simple fellow? There was a great wound in the man's left breast and a pool of blood had flowed out some time during the day, but now it was cold and congealed in the wintry dusk.

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His enemy? But this man might have come from a village like his own; he might have been brother or cousin or friend. How mark such a man as his enemy? Ko-sen's heart gave a great throb of revulsion and he turned away and began to sob suddenly without knowing why he did.

He felt that he was tired enough to die, tired enough to lie down and pillow his head on his arm as the dead man did and sleep as long. He walked slowly away, still sobbing. How was it that they had told him this was his enemy, this young, fresh-faced country man? He had been told all wrong. He had been fighting against men like himself—his own people. He would go and find Fah-li and they would go away somewhere, he and Fah-li. Never—never would he endure again a day like this, an evening like this, when he must see what he had seen. He stumbled on, weeping and bewildered, and the tears seemed to come forth as though they would never stop and he was glad of the dusk.

Fah-li—Fah-li—where was Fah-li? Ko-sen began to run a little to some lights flickering out of the gathering night. There

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would be the tents. He would find his eight living lads there and Fah-li would be among them and they would gather in the tent together and forget all those dead lying there in the blackness and in the falling cold. Once he stumbled and fell over something soft and inert and he struggled up in horror. Dead—dead. Everywhere the dead.

Where was Fah-li? Staggering forth at length into the circle of light about the tents he peered about him. The soldiers who were left of the day's battle were eating and drinking. Wine had been given them and meat because they had fought to victory, and everywhere there was eating and drinking. The older soldiers were shouting and hilarious and talking loudly of the looting they would have the next day when they had pressed forward into the surrendered city.

Looking about him, Ko-sen said to himself that there were only these old ones left. Indeed, of all the young men gone out that morning who had stood buffer between the enemy and their own men, there were but a scattered few who stood or sat apart, their heads hanging and on their faces looks of bewilderment and desperate weariness and

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horror. One lad sat thus on a stone, his head in his hands, and when Ko-sen went up to him he heard him sobbing softly and rhythmically as though it were something wholly beyond his control.

‘Yuan!’ cried Ko-sen. ‘You? Where are the others?’

But Yuan would not lift his head. ‘How can I know?’ he muttered thickly, and he sobbed on in great pants and he said suddenly, ‘I saw them bringing in the wounded——’ And then he stopped and would say no more and Ko-sen slipped past him to the tent. Surely Fah-li would be waiting there.

Ko-sen lifted the flap and peered into the darkness. It was very quiet. Ko-sen stepped in and felt about the tent. It was quite empty. He stood in the darkness wondering, and then a sickness of horror fell upon him. His eight men—Fah-li—where were they all? He ran back to Yuan and shook his shoulder roughly.

‘Where are—where is Fah-li?’ he shouted at Yuan.

Yuan cowered and drew himself together shivering, as though he remembered that of which he could not speak.

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‘Don’t—don’t touch me!’ he muttered.
‘The guns cut us down like young bamboos—don’t touch me—why did they put us in front like that?’

Out of the light of the flickering torches came the hoarse chorus of men’s voices singing the triumphant battle-song. Ko-sen heard a soldier say loudly not far away:

‘To-morrow and there will be silver and gold and jewelled trinkets and we may take what we like, for to-day we had the victory!’

The victory! Suddenly Ko-sen’s heart swelled with defeat and hatred. Yes, this victory, bought with the blood of his ten, with Fah-li’s precious blood! He pressed his lips together hard. Fah-li’s merry, pock-marked face lying there in the night dead!

Ko-sen could not bear it. He rushed forward and seized a torch from the end of a table of rude boards where men were feasting and he ran back to the field of battle. Somewhere there was Fah-li and he would not rest, no, though he walked the night through, looking into every dead face until he found the one he sought.

Ko-sen pressed forward to the spot wh

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he had stood with his men on that early battle-front. Fah-li would not be far away from that ! He would have been shot soon, for he would have been bewildered from the first and unable to manage his gun. On and on Ko-sen ran, stumbling and falling, his torch flaming out over many a quiet face. Some were still alive and called to him as he passed, begging for help. Others could only moan. But he stayed for none, after that first flash of his torch to see whether or not it was the one he sought. Two more of his own lads he found dead, and there he lingered an instant and then went on glad that neither was Fah-li and that he still might have hope. He called every moment as he went, 'Fah-li ! Fah-li ! It is I, Ko-sen !'

Then suddenly he found him, crumpled against the side of an old grave, scarcely ten feet from where they had last stood together marshalled for battle. Ko-sen knew the spot for it had been near a small ruined temple to the god of earth, a tiny building not four feet high that Ko-sen had noted in the morning. Fah-li had not moved at all, evidently, caught in the bewilderment of the sudden deafening noise of the first guns.

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He had simply been held there and had fallen almost at once.

But he was not dead. He lay breathing a little, his eyes shut, his pock-marks standing out like scars upon his pale, pale face. Ko-sen dropped beside him.

'Fah-li—Fah-li!' he cried in a great voice.

He thrust the torch into the soft earth of the field out of which the grave rose and he slipped his hand under Fah-li's head. It lay heavy and inert, but the quick and shallow breathing continued. Fah-li answered nothing to Ko-sen's cry. He was unconscious and there was a stream of blood beside him and one leg was gaping and torn badly at the thigh and blood was still oozing forth slowly. Evidently it had bled much at first and now had dried to a great mass of clots with the little rivulet dark and red still coming forth drop by drop. He had been protected by the grave, else surely during the day the remaining life would have been trampled out of him.

Ko-sen crouched beside him and called to him. But Fah-li could not hear any call and suddenly the torch reached its end and flickered as Ko-sen waited, and before he

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could save it the light was gone. Then Ko-sen did not dare to move to do anything except to wait until the dawn was come, and so he knelt there with his arm under Fah-li's head. Out of the silence of the black night there was only the sound then of Fah-li's breathing, light and wavering.

The coldness fell more chill upon the field as the night deepened. It seemed to Ko-sen as though there was in that chill some special quality of death, as though from all that quiet dead about them there emanated some icy breath. He cowered over Fah-li, rubbing his hands and holding them in his bosom, trying to share the slight warmth of his own shivering body with his friend.

Once he heard the stealthy padding of feet in the darkness and he was suddenly wildly afraid. What was this fresh terror? He struck out fiercely into the black with both his hands and he felt the furry coat of a dog. He could have laughed with relief. Dogs—scavenger dogs—the half-wild, homeless beasts that seek for food where they can and find a feast upon a battle-field! He struck out again and this

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time his fist descended upon the beast's snout, and the dog drew back with a snarl.

'Get away, dog!' Ko-sen shouted loudly. He was not afraid of these who turned coward when they were shouted at and were only brave when men were dead. Again and again through the night he shouted when he heard soft padding steps near him and each time the beast withdrew. He shuddered to think what might have happened to Fah-li lying there helpless if he had not found him. Ko-sen was glad of the darkness now that hid what was happening elsewhere. He would only think of Fah-li and nourish this small flicker of life that still came and went from his parted lips.

Then as hour passed into hour it seemed to Ko-sen as though not all the years of his life together had been so long as this one night. All the stories he had ever heard told in the village about spirits wandering out from the newly dead came into his mind, and as the night grew blacker and more still and there were not stars or moon above, he fancied he could hear strange sounds everywhere, slight, strange sounds.

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He could see nothing at all. The blackness was like a cloth wrapped about his eyes, pressing on his lids, but his ears were sharpened to every breath of the passing night wind. Instead of sleep a keen wakefulness prodded every nerve in his body, and although he tried to keep his eyes closed, in spite of himself he found he was staring alertly into the darkness, as though he expected a sudden enemy to spring upon him. And the night would not pass. He thought the night would never pass.

Suddenly in the distance he saw a small, round, dancing light. He sat up quickly from his crouching position. What was that? The light danced here and there, stopped, retreated, came on again, dancing. It seemed to search here and there. It was not like any light he had ever seen before. It was disembodied, as though no hand held it, as though no lamp sent it forth. It must be a spirit light! Ko-sen rose to his feet, his heart throbbing in his breast. The light came nearer, searching.

He must drag Fah-li behind the little temple! Perhaps the light would miss them. He bent swiftly and put his arms

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under his friend. Out of his stupor some great pain forced from Fah-li a dreadful moan. The light sprang forward suddenly. A voice spoke. Another answered; strange, incomprehensible sounds. Ko-sen hid his face over Fah-li and was motionless as an animal in terror. Perhaps if they were very still the light might miss them. But Fah-li moaned again and then again, and suddenly the light was fixed on them and the voice spoke again.

Then in despair Ko-sen looked up. There above the circle of light, steadily pouting on them now, he saw a strange face, a big head covered with white hair and two light eyes peering into his out of a white-bearded face. Ko-sen began to pant quickly. This was his enemy—this was a white man! Their white enemy had found them like this, helpless—he had come searching among the wounded to find the dying and the dead that he might take their eyes and hearts to make magic, evil medicines! Ko-sen began to scream without knowing that he did.

‘Don’t touch him—don’t touch him, you foreign devil!’

The big square face contracted a little and

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out of the bearded lips came a strange clattering of sounds. But the white man did not move and Ko-sen stared at him, tense and at bay. Then as if in obedience to a call another man came forward and Ko-sen looked and he saw it was a man of his own kind and this man spoke words to be understood, and he said:

‘We will help you, my son. We are doctors. We are come to see if there are any alive out of the battle whom we can save. If your comrade is not dead, he is one of those we seek.’

‘No!’ shouted Ko-sen. ‘No!’ He continued to stare into these two faces bent above him so strangely in the night.

Again the white man’s words clattered forth and again the Chinese doctor spoke.

‘We will take your friend to the hospital we have where the sick are made well with all the skill we can give, and we will see if your friend can be made well.’

‘No,’ said Ko-sen stubbornly, and with his hand he shielded Fah-li’s face from their eyes. ‘He is my brother and I am only waiting for the dawn when I will carry him back to our tent and I will care for him myself. I cannot leave him. He is my brother.’

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Then the white man spoke, and this time he spoke words that Ko-sen could understand, albeit somewhat harshly shaped, and he said:

‘My lad, you need not leave him. You may come and stay with him and you may see all that we do. Just let me look at him.’ And before Ko-sen could stop him this white man knelt down beside Fah-li and played his circle of fire over Fah-li and over the wounded leg, and then his long white fingers were touching the wound here and there in a swift, light fashion that was scarcely touch, and Ko-sen could do no more than watch.

‘Ah,’ said the white man gravely. ‘There may be a chance if he has not lain too long. Look here, my lad,’ and he turned almost sharply to Ko-sen. ‘If you would have your brother live at all you must give him this chance, else one thing I can promise you: he will surely die!’

‘No,’ said Ko-sen feebly, shaking his head and staring back into the frosty blue eyes that gazed so steadfastly into his.

The white man rose and again spoke the strange words, and then he withdrew a little

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and left the Chinese doctor alone with Ko-sen, and this one said persuasively :

‘ My son, let it be as the white man says. Do you come with us and we will take your brother no farther than you wish. If you see anything happening to him that is evil I will pledge you my word on my mother’s life that I will stop it and take your brother and give him to you again. See, I vow it ! ’ And the man raised his arm high. ‘ If you do not this thing, my son, ’ he finished earnestly, ‘ the lad will surely die, for there is very little life left in him. ’

Then Fah-li moaned a little out of his stupor and Ko-sen thought to himself in terror that Fah-li would die anyway with so grievous a wound and so out of his anxiety and his fear he said unwillingly :

‘ Well, since you are my countryman, let it be so, and I will accept your vow, but I must go with him everywhere and nothing shall be done that I do not say is right. ’

Then the Chinese doctor called and the two went away, and in a moment they had brought back a sort of bed made by cloth sewn up on poles, and upon this bed they lifted Fah-li most skilfully and covered him with a warm blanket they had. Then

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threading their way they moved to the north and Ko-sen ran after them, frightened and anxious, but determined that where Fah-li was there would he go and none should stop him.

XII

KO-SEN sat in a small white room beside the narrow white bed where Fah-li lay sleeping. A window was open to the morning sun and from the chair where he sat Ko-sen could look out into a square garden where there were evergreen trees and some shrubs of Indian bamboo, green even in winter and bright with red berries. No one was there in this quiet garden except that now and then a man came out and walked slowly about in the sunshine for a few moments, a sick man each time, as Ko-sen could see. Sometimes two or three came together and they walked about peacefully. It was not possible to believe that a spot so tranquil as this was in the same world with the field of death where he had spent the night with Fah-li.

This peace seemed to stream in at the open window and flood the small room where Ko-sen sat beside Fah-li now. There was nothing here except a little square white

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table, the white wooden chair on which he sat, the white bed where Fah-li lay. But the space was full of peace and stillness. Strange peace; strange stillness; not such stillness as had been in the old temple of shadows, not even the peace of the village and the fields. Here all was shining and white as he had never seen whiteness before, and it was a sort of vivid, living peace, full of light and shining. Fah-li was even part of it. He was cleaner than Ko-sen had ever seen him, his flesh clean, his garments white. His eyes were still closed from the sleeping-medicine they had given him.

When Ko-sen had seen this sleeping-medicine first he had stayed the doctors and asked them angrily what they did, putting that over his brother's face so he could not breathe. Ko-sen had heard of the curious and dangerous medicine that foreigners used to make people sleep so that they could do as they liked to the helpless sleeping creatures. Then the doctors told him:

‘It is only that he may not feel the pain—see, the leg is almost off! We can only try to save him. The pain will be terrible if we do not let him sleep.’

But still Ko-sen was not willing, and he

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was not willing at all until the Chinese doctor said :

‘My lad, I have also breathed in this medicine. Last winter I had a deep wound from infection in my hand and it had to be cut to the bone and I could not have borne it except that I breathed in this pleasant stuff and I did not know when the knife touched me. See, I am alive and well and I slept without pain and I have all my vitals in me still ! ’

Then Ko-sen watched, fearful and hesitating, while they placed a wad of cotton on Fah-li’s face. Nevertheless it was true ; Fah-li slept like a child while the white doctor washed and cut and sewed his torn thigh. Ko-sen could scarcely bear to watch it, and yet he felt he must watch every movement, lest at some moment when he was unguarded this white man would work Fah-li an ill.

But the white man worked on with the greatest care. Once he stopped and turned to talk with the Chinese doctor, and the Chinese doctor thrust in his gloved hand and felt some spot in the wound, and they talked again. But at last the flesh was sewed together and wrapped about with strips of

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white cloth, and two men robed in white came and lifted Fah-li on a bed and carried him here to this white room where already the early morning sunshine was falling upon the warmed white bed.

Then the white doctor remained in the room with them for a long time. He said not a word but he only watched Fah-li, steadfastly holding between his thumb and finger Fah-li's wrist. Ko-sen said nothing either but he sat quietly staring at this man. He looked at the great thick shoulders, at the hairy bearded neck and chin, at the grave, heavy-lidded blue eyes that never wavered. After an hour's thus staring in bewilderment Ko-sen found this question in his heart: 'Why does this man whose blood is not Fah-li's blood nor even his country the same as Fah-li's, thus labour the night through for one whom he has never seen before?'

And Ko-sen, staring on, asked himself this question, and he thought long upon it but he could not find a single answer to it. He said once that perhaps it was because this one white man was kind; but then this answer seemed foolish, for who has ever heard of such kindness as this, so great that

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a man would spend heart and life on a lad he has never seen? Surely there must be some hidden reason to make it worth the doing. And Ko-sen was more than ever filled with distrust.

Therefore when at the end of the time the white man rose from Fah-li's bedside and said to Ko-sen :

'My boy, your brother may live, but I cannot promise, because he lay all day in the dust with this open wound. We can only wait and see. Meanwhile you may walk across the garden to that other house and you will find breakfast waiting for you. You look very weary,'

Ko-sen said stubbornly :

'I will not leave my brother ; no, not for food, though I starve !'

The white man smiled at this but he said nothing, only went away. And so Ko-sen sat on, stiffly determined in the brightening morning sunshine until, to his surprise, one brought him food on a tray to eat, and he suddenly knew he was very hungry and he ate like one starved. Never did white rice and fish and cabbage and bean curd taste so sweet and fresh to any one as this did to Ko-sen, and he wished with all his heart

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that Fah-li might eat too, but he lay there sleeping and silent. Then when his food was eaten, Ko-sen sat on watching and wondering what was to happen to the two of them here in the camp of the enemy.

It was noon before Ko-sen heard any sound from Fah-li. He was looking down into the garden spot which was now full of sick men who looked as though they were better of their ills, when he heard a voice muttering and he went quickly to the bedside and Fah-li's eyes were open and he stared unknowingly at Ko-sen and he said over and over again hoarsely :

‘This gun I can never shoot—it will turn on me—ah, I am killed !’

Then Ko-sen took his hand and smoothed it and he cried out loudly :

‘Fah-li! Fah-li! You are here and living!’

Then after a long time Fah-li looked at last with understanding and he murmured faintly, ‘Ko-sen!’ and just at that moment the Chinese doctor hastened in with a white-robed woman beside him and he said hurriedly to Ko-sen :

‘Do not talk to him. He has not strength for it.’

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And the white-robed woman, who was of Ko-sen's race also, thrust something into Fah-li's mouth, a small pipe it seemed and made of glass, and Ko-sen watched fearfully to see what would come of it. But no harm came of it, for in a moment she had withdrawn it again and she said :

‘ There is fever.’

Then the doctor said to Ko-sen :

‘ You must let him rest and you may feel safe that none will harm him, and this I will stake my life upon.’

Then Ko-sen looked closely at this woman who had come to care for Fah-li and he saw she had a full, kindly face and simple, quiet ways, and he looked again and saw her feet and they were large as though they had never been bound and he said quickly :

‘ Ah, are you revolutionist, too ?’

And she laughed then, a good hearty laugh, and she said :

‘ Well, and some have called me so !’

Then Ko-sen, hearing her laugh, felt suddenly eased, and he looked down into the garden and he thought longingly that he would like to go out and lie in the sun for a little while, and perhaps he could leave Fah-li to this woman, and suddenly as he

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thought of rest he was most desperately weary, although to this hour he had not thought of it. And so he let himself be led away by the doctor.

But the doctor did not lead him into the garden. He led him to another small, quiet room and he said kindly :

‘My son, you are faint with weariness and do you lie here and sleep all the weariness out of your flesh and bones. Here you are safe as in your own home and there is not one who will harm you. I stake my life upon it, I who am your countryman.’

Then Ko-sen laid himself down on the white bed and he marvelled at how soft and clean it was, but before he could think of it clearly to wonder long he was asleep.

When Ko-sen woke it was noon of another day. He sprang out of bed and rubbed his eyes, half blinded by the strange brightness of the white room and by the brilliant sunshine. His first dazed thought was of Fah-li and he opened the door and darted down the hall to the room he remembered and he opened the door.

There was Fah-li lying on the selfsame bed where Ko-sen had left him, only now

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he was fully awake and he was eating a little rice gruel that the white-robed woman held to his lips with a spoon. He smiled with the shadow of his merry smile when he saw Ko-sen and tried to speak and could not with his mouth full and he made a mighty effort to wink one eye. His face was very pale, Ko-sen saw, but he was awake : Fah-li was awake ! Ko-sen laughed and seized his hand. Then Fah-li spoke in the faintest voice Ko-sen had ever heard, and it seemed he had only breath for one word and this word was ' Ko-sen ! '

' He must not talk,' said the white-robed one, and Ko-sen, frightened by the faintness of Fah-li's voice and by his little strength, sat alarmed and holding Fah-li's hand. When Fah-li could swallow but a few sups of the rice Ko-sen urged him, saying :

' Eat, because only thus can you live.'

But the woman said, ' Do not urge him. Let him do as he is able.'

And so again Ko-sen sat in silence watching and he saw the woman in white moving deftly about, and she eased Fah-li in the bed and she took some sort of stuff that smelled like wine from a bottle and she rubbed Fah-li's arms and breast and his weary

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back, and Fah-li murmured, 'Ah—good—good——' And Ko-sen wondered at the woman's gentleness.

Then in came the same tall white doctor and he smiled at the two lads, and he went to Fah-li and he pressed here and there on the boy's body and he asked :

'Pain? Pain here?'

And Fah-li nodded and smiled the ghost of his own smile, this though the sweat stood out on his forehead.

And again the doctor thrust the splinter of glass into Fah-li's mouth and he looked at it and shook his head and himself he smoothed back Fah-li's tangled hair from his pocked face before he went out. And Ko-sen watched all this and he said aloud :

'It is strange that I am not afraid of him to-day as I was yesterday.'

And the woman said as though surprised :

'Why should you fear him? No one does except one who does wrong. He is so kind that he is called the Jesus-doctor.'

'What is that doctor?' asked Ko-sen. 'I have not heard of such before, nor have I heard that name except in foreign churches.'

'It is the name under which we work here,' said the woman quietly. 'But hush !

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We must not talk. Now go and let your brother rest.'

And Ko-sen was surprised that this time he could go without fear and leave Fah-li, and he went out into the little garden of evergreens.

Thus the days passed and thus ten days passed and Ko-sen felt he walked in a dream, so different was this world from that of temple or village or soldiers' camp. Here one heard nothing of war, and if soldiers came in wounded, as many did, and even as Fah-li had done, they were soon changed into nothing but sick men being healed if it was possible that they be healed.

In the hours when Fah-li slept Ko-sen wandered everywhere, and he saw and wondered. He saw every morning crowds of sick people with every sort of sickness come to the gate. And one stood there to receive them, and if the sick man were poor nothing was required of him and he went in free, and only those paid silver or copper who were able. And the sick were divided into those with tumours and ulcers on the skin who must go to one place, and into blind who went to another, and those with

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broken bones to another, and little children and their mothers to another. And Ko-sen day after day went to one place and another as he would. If sometimes one said to him sternly, 'What do you here, lad?' another would answer, 'It is the lad of whom the white doctor spoke that he was to be allowed to see all that he would.' And then Ko-sen was allowed to remain, and he watched and pondered and the knowledge of what he saw sank into his heart.

But most of all he marvelled at the hands of the white doctor, for these hands never feared to touch any flesh however loathsome or however unclean. Running ulcers and open, festering wounds and rheumy eyes, these hands touched them all and washed and bound them, and Ko-sen could not understand it that such fearsome, filthy flesh as some had upon their bones, such flesh as turned Ko-sen's stomach even to look upon, this white doctor could touch as gently as though it were his own. And Ko-sen thought to himself that he could even understand it better if the Chinese doctor did this, as indeed he did also, but how could this white man, when such flesh was not of his own blood and bones?

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Yet Ko-sen saw to his surprise that this great tender man could be mightily angry too, so that everyone who saw his blazing blue eyes shrank away at the sight. And this anger flamed forth when a child was mistreated or one had not done his duty in this place to a sick man or woman. Once Ko-sen saw this anger when the slave of a rich woman of the city came in leading a little slave child, a girl, whose mistress for some childish fault had pressed into her little arms the living coals from her tobacco-pipe, and these burns had festered and not healed until the child's flesh was rotten with unhealed sores. Then the doctor, tending these sores, let his anger forth and the very hairs of his head seemed to stand up and his eyes shot out anger, and Ko-sen waited to hear him bellow out curses as another would have done in such anger as this, but the strange white man only muttered over and over again between his closed teeth,

‘O just God, see this! O merciful Father, see this little child!’

And Ko-sen wondered on whom it was that this man called, but he did not dare to ask, seeing the wrath in those eyes.

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But of all the strangeness of these strange days Fah-li was most strange of all. For out of his wayward heart grew a great fondness for the white man, so that in his fretfulness and fever he would cry out :

‘Where is the white doctor? Call him to ease me of my pain!’

And even in the night when he called thus the doctor would come and smiled patiently and soothed him this way and that. And Ko-sen marvelled much, for Fah-li was like a dog or a child who is timid enough at usual times and then suddenly trustful of some stranger whom he loves without knowledge.

And Ko-sen still would not give up wholly his distrust, because the question must needs be answered somehow, ‘Why do they do it for us who are not of their clan or village or country?’

One day he even asked Fah-li this question and he said :

‘Fah-li, how is it you do not fear this white man who, we have been taught, is our enemy?’

And Fah-li answered fretfully out of his pain and fever :

‘Where is he? Tell him to come. There is pain in my torn thigh.’

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But after a fashion this was answer to Ko-sen, though still not answer enough, and he watched and pondered on, and he came at last to this wonder, and it was the wonder if, after all, perhaps his young captain had been wrong, and there was one among white men who was not evil.

XIII

NOW even Ko-sen could see as the days passed that all was not well with Fah-li. His face was always flushed with fever and although he would eat this and that of the things he liked one day, on the next he would touch nothing and his eyes were restless and hot and bright and he did not know clearly what he said.

One day when the white doctor came in he unbound Fah-li's thigh as he did every day himself, and he shook his head and he said: 'Fah-li, once more you must breathe the sleeping-medicine. There is something foul in this thigh of yours that I must get out if I can.'

And Ko-sen, who sat in his accustomed place by the window, cried out, 'Not again!' for he remembered that dreadful first night. But Fah-li looked at the doctor trustfully as a child might and he whispered, 'It is as you say—my father!'

And so that very afternoon they took

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Fah-li away again and Ko-sen could not this time bear to see it all again, and he waited in the white room by Fah-li's bed. And at last after darkness had begun to fall they brought him back, the two doctors and the white-robed woman, and they laid him most tenderly upon the bed. Then Ko-sen, staring, felt his heart stop. Fah-li's leg was gone—gone at the thigh!

'What—what——' he began, and the kindly Chinese doctor stopped him and put his arm about Ko-sen's shoulders and he said:

'My son, there was no other way. It is his last chance, if there is a chance. The poison of that long day and night on the battle-field has eaten into his blood and we cannot rid him of it. Better a life saved than a leg.'

But Ko-sen shook his head. The tears welled into his eyes. Fah-li without a leg—Fah-li with all his tricks and his hopes for making his living at making people laugh—Fah-li of all persons needed his legs.

'It is the same as his life,' muttered Ko-sen, and he turned away that they might not see him weep.

But the white doctor said nothing. Only he sat there, holding Fah-li's wrist, his eyes

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fixed on Fah-li's pallid, sleeping face, and himself he covered Fah-li gently if he moved, and when Fah-li moaned the doctor pressed some liquid between his teeth and once he slipped a hollow needle filled with medicine into Fah-li's arm.

All the night long they watched. At dawn Fah-li struggled up out of some depth where he had been alone, and he saw the white man sitting there and he said in the smallest, weakest voice that was less than a breath :

' My father——' and slipped back again into the depths alone.

Ko-sen, looking at the white man with a strange jealousy pulling at his heart, saw the doctor move his lips and shut his grave blue eyes quickly once or twice, but still he said nothing.

And Ko-sen, watching this strange pair, found his whole heart yearning and consumed with this question :

' Why ?—why ? '

But the poison had its way with Fah-li. This merry lad who had only wished to make people laugh and who never understood more than the simplest things of life,

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such simple things as friendship with Ko-sen and time to play and make nonsense, had not in him the power to determine to live, and he let his life slip away from him as though he did not care for it or know it. And at the end of the second day when Ko-sen watched and the two doctors and the white-robed woman also, Ko-sen knew for himself that the hour was soon to come when Fah-li must die.

The Ko-sen knelt beside Fah-li's bed and he looked at Fah-li steadfastly and he did not even know that he was weeping as he looked, so great was his anguish. Fah-li was out of his sleep now, but still he was not fully awake and he lay drowsily murmuring something that none could hear clearly, and his hand was locked in the white doctor's hand.

Ko-sen asked once only :

'Is he not in pain, murmuring like this?'

And the doctor answered :

'No, we have given him that which can ease him into his rest.'

And so they watched on, and in the dusk of the evening after sunset and before moonrise Fah-li stirred himself once and he opened his eyes widely and he looked at Ko-sen fully and he said uncertainly :

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‘Ko-sen?’

And Ko-sen leaned forward and spoke eagerly :

‘I am here, Fah-li ! What do you wish ?’

But Fah-li’s eyes moved slowly as with great effort to search some one and he said, ‘Where is—my——’ and then his eyes found that for which they sought and he said with that sad shadow of his old smile : ‘my father !’

And the white doctor bent over him and slipped his arm under the dying lad’s head and gathered him to his breast and held him.

And it seemed to Ko-sen that, in this end, Fah-li must turn to him, who was his brother-friend, and not to this stranger, and he laid hold on Fah-li’s other hand, but when he would have taken it he found it clutching fast the white stuff of the doctor’s coat and so Ko-sen let him be.

And the doctor sat on motionless, his eyes fixed on Fah-li’s face until at last out of the dusk of the room a soft shudder seemed to run, and the doctor said very quietly :

‘The lad is gone.’

And the doctor himself unloosed Fah-li’s

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fingers and held them an instant before he put them down. So did Ko-sen see Fah-li die.

And in the night when they had done all that there was to be done, the white man turned to Ko-sen and he said :

‘ Where are this lad’s parents, that we may tell them ? ’

‘ He had no one,’ said Ko-sen slowly.
‘ He was fatherless and an orphan.’

Then the white doctor said simply :

‘ Is it so ? Then I thank God he could call me Father who had no other—my poor little lad ! ’ And turning, he walked quickly out of the room.

XIV

AFTER Fah-li died, after Ko-sen had seen the quiet square of land, now turning green with coming spring, where they laid him among others there, it seemed to Ko-sen that he could not stay one more day in the hospital. However kind they were to him, he could not stay. As quickly as he could he must get away. Without a word, then, on the very night of the afternoon of the day they buried Fah-li, without farewell to anyone, Ko-sen slipped out of the great gate and into the street, and asking this one and that he found his way back to the camp where the soldiers were. And as he drew near it seemed to him as though he had been away for a lifetime and as though what had passed before was a dream from which he was not yet awake.

In the camp everything was in confusion of packing to move on. Ko-sen coming in among many was not even noticed, and for a long time he looked for a face he knew.

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The one he sought most of all was Yuan but he could not see him anywhere. At last he found an old soldier whom they had talked with in times past, and Ko-sen said :

‘Where is Yuan gone, who was the rich man’s son?’

And the old soldier merely shook his head carelessly. But others answered, ‘He is gone home to his rich father, for he could not bear battle and he stole away in the night.’ Others said, ‘That lad? He drowned himself in the river the day after the big battle.’ But not one knew where he was, or cared.

Then Ko-sen thought of his young captain and how he had never heard his voice but once on the field that day, and he asked one who passed him where the captain was, and the soldier pointed toward a man whom Ko-sen had never seen who strode toward them. And this was a thin-faced, spectacled young man who stood stiffly in his new uniform and made no sign of recognition when Ko-sen saluted as he passed. And Ko-sen knew with a heavy heart that his own captain was dead.

Everywhere through the tents the men

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were quarrelling and complaining that they must leave behind them the goods and the stuffs they had taken here and there, and, as of old, Ko-sen was sickened and made yet more sad, although some there were like him who had taken nothing that belonged to others and who listened scornfully to the bawling of the old soldiers who were soldiers from other wars and whose hope of life was in what they could loot.

And strangest of all to Ko-sen were these young lads, yet many more young lads, gathered out of somewhere, and now being drilled and shouted at and shaped for the next battle. Ko-sen on the second day after his return stood watching them bitterly. So had he and his ten lads marched and turned and obeyed their captain, and of what good had it all been?

That night after they had eaten rice and cabbage at the rough boards of the tables set out between the trees he listened with the others to the speeches made by the captains to the men. The old phrases fell on his ears once more, 'Save our country,' 'Down with the foreign imperialist,' 'Down with the old militarists.' In the light from the torches set about on the

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tables he looked about at the faces. The old soldiers sat apathetically, half asleep after the meal they had eaten, but here and there were the faces of lads, young faces, wondering, alight, stirred. How was it that in his own heart that had once leaped to hear these noble words, there was now only a great quietness, a quiet as deep as the green spot where Fah-li lay?

Suddenly he was in an agony of homesickness. He must go home. He must see his father and his mother and Siu-may again and the fields again and the thatched house which was his home. He was not afraid of the temple any more—not afraid of anything except that he might not be at home once more.

Filled with this great wave of longing Ko-sen slipped away through the darkness and went to the new captain's tent and stood there listening. Then he lifted the flap that was the door and peered in. The captain sat there at a rough box which served for table. Behind him, pinned to the side of the tent, was Sun Yat-sen's picture.

The captain had been writing something with a camel's hair brush on a large sheet of white paper and now with no mean skill he

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was drawing the picture of a common man wrapped in the folds of a huge and venomous serpent. Ko-sen drew near and waited. He understood well enough the meaning of this picture, for he had seen many like it on the walls of towns and villages through which his army had passed. The serpent was meant for foreign religions whose wiles wrapped about a man before he understood what was happening to him.

. . . Well, but Fah-li had called a white man 'My father!' . . .

Ko-sen sighed a little without knowing what he did, and suddenly the young captain looked up, his spectacles glittering in the light of the candle by which he worked.

'Who are you, and what do you want here?' he asked, his voice high and sharp and his brush suspended.

'I?' said Ko-sen, stammering and disconcerted. Surely there had never been in the world such sharp eyes as these behind the spectacles.

'Are you one of my men?' persisted the sharp voice.

'My captain is dead,' said Ko-sen, in a low voice.

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‘Where are you registered, then?’ persisted the new officer. ‘Under whose name do you serve?’

‘Sir, let me go to my home!’ cried Ko-sen suddenly in an anguish. ‘Sir, I fought in the battle—there is only I left—I am not well—my father grows old—I am an only son——’

The cold face grew very still, the sharp clear eyes cold and black, the narrow lips drawn down a little.

‘What is all this to me,’ he said, ‘this stuff of only sons and sickness and old fathers? We revolutionists know no father and no mother except our country—no sickness except hers under her oppressors.’

The officer fell to writing again, tracing swiftly and exactly the lines of the characters beside the white serpent. Then he dipped his brush into red ink and carefully he outlined its red tongue and red eyes. Ko-sen waited, shaking a little in spite of his determination that he would not. What was the matter with him, he wondered? Not fear—he was not afraid, only he had so great a weariness he could scarcely stand. He began again in a small weary voice:

‘Sir, I want to go to my home——’

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‘Go, then, coward!’ thundered the officer suddenly. ‘Do you think I have need of babies and cowards who prate of home and father in such an hour as this?’

He rose and his arm shot out at Ko-sen, and Ko-sen without knowing what he did turned and ran quickly out of the tent and into the darkness.

Across the old battle-field he ran, past the little temple, into the streets nearest and there he stopped and asked panting of the first comer, an old man carrying a lighted red paper lantern :

‘Old sir, where is south, if I may so trouble you?’

The old man peered over his sparse white beard and answered nothing but he pointed with his lantern uplifted so that the light fell upon a road to the right, a cobbled, rocky road, and down that road Ko-sen ran into the night.

Back over the country through which they had marched in hope did Ko-sen now go alone and in silence. Where before he had been swift to speak to a countryman on a village street or country road of the revolution, he now spoke to no one and he

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plodded on. If he thought of anything it was to say to himself dully sometimes :

‘ Well, but if we had the victory, as they say, how is it that these people I pass are as they were before, and there are as many poor as before? What victory was it and for what?’

But he could never answer his own questions and he went on. At night he slept where he could, in the lee of a hill or curled against the sheltered side of a lonely grave. By day he walked as long as he could, begging a bit of food here and there at the inns, but always avoiding beggars lest he be pursued as one who comes into a business unlawfully and so spoils the day’s gain for others.

Well he remembered the villages and towns through which he now passed, although no one turned to look at him now as he went by in his old stained and disfigured uniform as they had when they had paused to stare when the young regiment came swinging by. One day Ko-sen came to the village where the young Christian had watched the soldiers despoiling his church, and now when Ko-sen passed he saw the place was clean and decent again

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and as it had been before, and the young Christian was there teaching some lads how to play a game with a ball and an outstretched net, and when he saw Ko-sen he did not recognize him. He said only :

‘ You look tired and hungry and therefore come in and eat a bowl of hot rice before you go on.’

And Ko-sen did not tell him who he was but he went in and ate the hot rice and went on his way again in silence.

And one day he came to the church where his young captain had torn down the pictures and had set up the face of Sun Yat-sen, and Ko-sen looked in for curiosity and he saw all the pictures were back again in their places and he looked closely and saw that the old man who lived there had pasted all the torn edges together carefully so that all was as it had been, except that the picture of Sun Yat-sen was now there also. And the old man sat in the corner of the southern wall of the house and he slept peacefully but he waked out of the light sleep of old age when he saw Ko-sen and Ko-sen asked him :

‘ How is it you have left the picture of the Leader there among these other and foreign gods ? ’

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Then the old man smiled and he said :

' All good men from around the four seas are brothers and there is room always for another good man,' and he looked at Ko-sen and at the ragged clothes he wore and he went on, ' I have a coat my son wore who died last year and you are not bigger than he and you may wear it,' and he rose and after a time he brought out a good plain-lined coat of blue cotton and but little worn and he put it about Ko-sen's shoulders and he put a small piece of silver into Ko-sen's hand and he asked nothing of who Ko-sen was or where he went. And Ko-sen wondered at this kindness and he went on, wondering.

One other was kind to him also out of the many who gave him willingly enough a bit of bread or a half bowl of rice left from their own meals. This was the old abbot who lived in the despoiled temple, although he had not found the money to repair the broken gods he still worshipped, and when Ko-sen stared at the fingerless idols and the cracked Buddhas the old man said simply :

' Gods are not held within these earthen shapes, but they are free moving spirits and

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these shapes are but to recall them to our childish, earthly minds' And then he said, staring at Ko-sen, 'Lad, your feet are coming through those shoes and I have a pair, stout and scarcely worn since I do not go about much, and they are of dark cloth and would not be noticed for a priest's shoes.'

And the old abbot went inside and fetched the shoes and he was pleased and laughed like a child when he fitted them to Ko-sen's bared feet and when he saw they fitted well with only a little looseness about the top. And he gave Ko-sen food to eat and a packet of cold rice and cabbage folded into a dried lotus leaf, for the old man had no money in his girdle and he had only the food he could grow on the temple lands.

And now Ko-sen, walking on day after day, was conscious of but one thought and it was that he must get home. When he reached home he could think and plan further of what he was to do, for in spite of the pain and the questions in his heart, going on day after day like this he could not think. Once he looked at himself and he saw himself as he was and he said to himself bitterly :

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‘What am I now—my legs covered with my old revolutionary uniform, upon my back a Christian coat, and on my feet shoes given me by an old abbot in a temple! What I am no one would know and I do not know myself.’

And so he walked on to his home.

Now, on the day when Ko-sen at last drew near to his own village it was a day in spring when the wind blew hard and chill and it seemed nearer to winter than summer. There was no snow, but the sky was heavy with rain and the clouds dark and the bitter wind blew out of the north. Ko-sen’s hands and feet were blistered with sores that had been made by the freezing of his flesh in winter and that had broken out again in the chill of the nights he had slept in ill-sheltered places, and his lips were cracked with dust and sores.

But he struggled on and at last he stood at the door of his own home and it was night, for he had made a mighty effort that day and had doubled his usual miles. And the door was shut against the wind but he beat upon the door, and his father came and opened it and stood in the doorway holding

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high a lighted torch in his hand and the light fell on Ko-sen's face and ill-clothed body and his father saw who it was and he cried out loudly :

‘ My son is come ! ’

He dragged Ko-sen in with his other hand and he shut the door against the wind and night, and Ko-sen stood there, within the quiet and the shelter of his own home, and there was warmth coming from a heap of coals red in a pottery bowl in the middle of the floor. And Ko-sen stood there, smiling fixedly, speechless, and he could not believe that he was home again and that there was an end to the weary days.

Then his mother ran in from the kitchen where she was cooking the evening rice and Siu-may ran in from her room with the shoe sole in her hand upon which she worked at the moment, and the room was suddenly filled with their laughter and weeping and Ko-sen heard his father's rough, kind voice saying over and over distractedly :

‘ Get him clothes—get him hot water to bathe—get him food—my son is come home ! ’

And Ko-sen smiling, swaying, dizzy with the warmth, felt his last strength go suddenly

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out of him and he crumpled upon the floor and his father's voice sounded small and far away and then he heard it no more.

But as suddenly as he had fallen he awaked once more and he found himself washed and clean and in his own bed, and when his father saw Ko-sen's eyes opened, he shouted, and his mother came running in with a bowl of rice cooked soft and stirred up with a fresh egg, and Ko-sen seeing it was mightily hungry and he took the bowl and drank it off and smiled at them and fell before he knew it into a deep and dreamless sleep.

XV

THEN for many days did Ko-sen do no more than eat and sleep, and he said nothing of all that he had suffered and seen, and they waited until he could tell them. But his mother busied herself to make the things he had loved to eat, pork balls stewed in tender cabbage hearts, and a fish caught from the pond and browned in the cauldron with sugar and vinegar and wine, and she even made the little sweet larded cakes which are eaten at the New Year, for she said :

‘ Since you were not here and we did not know if you were even alive, we could not eat them. Now you are here and it makes our festival.’

And Ko-sen ate and slept and the sores upon his flesh healed and his skin grew healthy again and brown, and day by day strength crept into his flesh and bones. But still he could not speak, but he knew there was something in his heart waiting to

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be seen and recognized, and well he knew he was no more the simple country lad who had run away from a temple. He had seen his country and he had seen life and death and he could forget none of it. There was need some day to serve his country, that he knew, but how he did not know, and he could not face it all yet. But he knew he could never go back to the army.

Then the full spring came with soft winds and silent sudden rains and the air was warm and the earth grew moist and fertile and the young wheat sprang up and headed and it was time for planting and cultivating of rice and vegetables. And Ko-sen went into the fields and worked with his father as he had in the old days, but now he worked as a man and he drove the buffalo in the plough and he scattered seed in the loose earth, and there in the peace and warmth of the sunshine and in the musky fragrance of the soil upturned, he felt healing come into him and he began to look into his heart and see what was there of memory and purpose.

Yet even so he could not do this all at once. He began by asking his father one day of certain things which now he wanted to know, although till now he had not

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cared whether he knew them or not, and he said :

‘ We have many things to speak of, my father, and now to-day I seem able because some soreness has passed out of my heart. Where is that one to whom my sister was betrothed who stood in my place when you gave me to the temple ? ’

‘ I have waited for you to ask, ’ said his father slowly, and he stood still and leaned on his hoe and he looked at Ko-sen. ‘ My son, he died of a plague there was here in the autumn and many died of it. It was vomiting and purging and burning fever, and death came soon and men seemed to get it from what they ate although none knew how. But you know he was a greedy one and he would eat and something he ate went wrong with him and so he died. And all this winter I have said I must look for a new husband for your sister, for she is near woman now, and I must do my duty by her and give her house and husband. ’

‘ Then am I son to you again, ’ said Ko-sen slowly. He waited half afraid, for well he knew that if his father said, ‘ You belong still to the temple, ’ then must he answer with all his strength, ‘ That do I not. I fear

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no more the gods and priests. That at least has the revolution taught me.'

But his father did not answer thus. He hesitated and then he said half sighing as he fell to hoeing again among the tender seedlings :

'My son, there has come a change over our land and over our village and what the change is I can scarcely say myself, because as the eye sees the land it is the same and men still eat and drink and play and work when they must and children are born and people die. But still there is a change. In the early winter after you went away there came through this town and through our village a band of youths and they sang of a thing they called revolution and they went into the temple and lived there and they despoiled the gods. And when we heard of it, I and the other farmers of this countryside, we went and we drove them out with our hoes and our knives, for they had committed an outrage.

'But, my son, when I was in the temple I saw the priests and they were afraid and the gods even were silent and allowed themselves to be knocked down. I saw that old and fierce God of the North, who stands

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guardian in the entrance to the temple, and I have been afraid of him since I was a child clinging to my mother's hand as she worshipped. But he lay there also, his head broken off from his body and inside he was no more than this clay which I turn with my hoe, and suddenly I was not afraid.'

Ko-sen looked at his father steadfastly. 'Then—you do not believe in the gods any more?' he asked.

His father straightened himself and wiped his forehead with the end of his blue cotton coat and then he shook his head.

'There is still the Old Man in Heaven,' he said simply. 'That one sends rain and sun and fruition to the earth. But what he is or who he is I do not know.' And he fell to hoeing again.

Then Ko-sen, having worked beside his father for a time in silence, said once more:

'I also, my father, I went into the revolution and I also went into the temples.'

'Yes, my son?' said his father.

Then Ko-sen worked on and again he said:

'There was an old abbot in one temple and he said something of which I think

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often, and it was this, that when men destroy their old gods they will find new ones to take their place.'

'That sounds true,' answered his father, 'and if the abbot was a good man doubtless it is true. True it is that there must be an Old Man in Heaven for farmers, else who would send sun and rain?'

'But I,' said Ko-sen softly and half to himself, 'I do not know where a new god is for me, nor even what he is.'

And this was the beginning of Ko-sen's looking into his own heart.

Then, once he had opened the gates of speech, it seemed to Ko-sen that he could tell his father and his mother and Siu-may everything and indeed that he must tell to ease his own heart. And evening after evening when they had eaten their rice they sat and Ko-sen told them and they could not hear enough of all he had seen and learned. And they marvelled much, his father most that Ko-sen had learned to read, and he found a bit of paper that he had picked up on the street and he brought it to Ko-sen and Ko-sen read it easily enough for it was one of the leaflets that revolutionists scatter

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as they go. His father laughed with delight to hear it, not that he had understood what it said, but because of his pride in his son.

And Ko-sen's mother marvelled most because he had passed through such peril and that he came out alive and she must hold his hand and smooth it and weep a little. As for Siu-may she must weep when she heard of Fah-li and of his sad end, and indeed when Ko-sen told of the hospital they all listened in silence and Ko-sen's father's mouth was ajar to hear of what they did and his mother cried out, 'Now I would never dare to enter such a place!' But Siu-may, when she heard that there were women there who learned and worked and were free, yearned to be like them, and when she heard of the white-robed one she murmured:

'Oh, I wish I were in such a place!'

Then when all had been told Ko-sen sat musing and thinking and at last he said:

'Well do I know I cannot be as I was before when my life was bound up in this little village. I have heard the call of the revolution and go I must to do something for my country, but I do not know what.'

And when he had said this Ko-sen knew that the thing in his heart which was waiting

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for him he had now faced and brought out into the light. But his mother asked fearfully :

‘ You do not mean you would go back into wars again, my son ? ’

‘ No, not that,’ replied Ko-sen slowly, his eyes fixed on the light of the flaming candle.

‘ No, not when they cut down my ten lads like that—and the one I saw lying on the ground was a farmer such as I might have been had I lived my life as I was born. No, my country is bigger than they told me, and we are all in it.’ And he thought a while and he said, ‘ There must be another way to serve my country, if I could see that way.’

But they could not help him, these three simple people who had never travelled ten miles away from their own village, and who when Ko-sen spoke of ships upon the river and of battle-fields could not see what he meant them to see and it was as though he spoke to them of dreams. Therefore they went to bed, each thinking as they were able, of what they had heard.

But Ko-sen could not sleep of nights, and day after day he worked in the fields with his father, and now having told all he was very silent again, thinking of what the future

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must be and of what he must do with this life of his. And thinking he came to be very glad for all his young captain had told him and taught him.

‘Whether he was right or wrong,’ Ko-sen thought, ‘he waked my heart and he made me see what my country is and that it is not only a little village and an old temple. But I cannot serve my country in the way he taught me. I cannot serve her by war and death, that I know, for so Fah-li died, and who knows how many like him I might kill if I set my arm to it? No, there must be another way.’

But he could not find it.

Then one evening in the early summer, when the young rice was being planted into the flooded fields and the peaches were turning red upon their branches and all the world was full of life and growing, it came to Ko-sen what he must do. It came as effortlessly and as suddenly as though a bird flying past has lighted unexpectedly on his shoulder. He straightened his back from the field in which he stood and he said to his father :

‘My father, I see the way—I see what I

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am to do !' And when his father paused and looked at him without understanding, Ko-sen explained : ' Father, when I look back over my days I see that there was one place where life was made and saved and it was in that place where Fah-li died. True, he died, but he died how happily and they did what they could. I never saw death so clean and like a child's sleep, and it was so strange the love they had for him that I cannot understand it even now, seeing Fah-li was not of their clan or blood. But I must go back and ask them to take me as apprentice and learn of them and so shall I serve my country best.'

And his father looked at him patiently and humbly, his hands still fumbling about the watery roots of the rice plant he held, and he said :

' Well, my son, you must do as you will, for these are new times and I cannot judge. It is not as it was in my young days when we had not heard of revolutions and we did not see the gods crumbling on their faces. But there is your sister and well I wish you would stay until she is wed and my duty done.'

Then Ko-sen seemed to see light fall

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upon an unending road and he spoke as fast as he could think and he said :

‘But, my father, my father, there are women there, many of them, who learn also, and why may not Siu-may go there with me and work together with me? I can help her and so may we be free indeed. My father, it is a new day—I saw women in the ranks of soldiers, even! How much better in this other service!’

His father rose then also, and he looked at Ko-sen for a time. And he saw Ko-sen’s face and Ko-sen’s eyes were staring into the sky and he was smiling, satisfied with what he had thought of, dreaming of the days to come. And this was because Ko-sen saw himself in that life, busy, learned in the way of saving others like Fah-li, free from the old fears of temple and priest and battle; he saw Siu-may looking as had that white-robed one who tended Fah-li, moving swiftly and silently as she had upon her free and competent feet. Yes, he would go back and he would say :

‘I and my sister, we will take service under you for our country’s sake. We are revolutionists, we two! Teach us how to save our people.’

THE YOUNG REVOLUTIONIST

‘My son,’ said Ko-sen’s father gently, ‘tell me what service this is of which you speak. Under whose name is it?’

Ko-sen looked at his father out of his dream and collected himself. What service? He remembered suddenly that he did not even know the name of the hospital or of the doctors or anyone. He only knew that there was some spirit there common to them all. What had that white-robed one told him? He knit his brows, remembering, and looking earnestly at his father he said:

‘The Master there. I think they told me the Master there is one named Jesus. It is under Him we would take service for our country.’

